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PORCELAIN: THE
SOUL OF IRELAND

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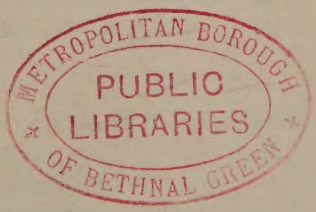
PORCELAIN: THE SOUL OF IRELAND

By JOHN MACKAY

AUTHOR OF "THE TEN ISLANDS," ETC.

"And so—the wars ended that merry lord, Don Jorge, designing the pleasantrie—it came to pass that blazing a pelican in piety (as was his will), and gathering about me my gonfalonier, chaplain, and captains of the Guard, I had stepped on board the ship Prosperity *bound for Sure Haven, in that pleasant western island of the new strange star; and forced to lay aside my writings. For the hazards of that novel Governorship, and the men I found there who had waxed fat and kicked, tested a man."*

OLD MANUSCRIPT.



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AUTHOR'S MANIFEST

WHEN a man has anything to tell about a thing to people who knew more about it years ago than he has begun to learn, it behoves him—e'en though silken calved and could say a word for himself—to approach and talk modestly.

PORCELAIN: THE SOUL OF IRELAND

PART I

GAULTIER

"I am a lieutenant-general of pottering. You perhaps are a colonel in the same service."

"Allons! whoever you are come travel with me. Travelling with me you find what never tires."

PORCELAIN: THE SOUL OF IRELAND

THE IDEA GERMINATES

It was the summer of 19—— Five years had gone since the King's authority had been openly flouted, over a twelvemonth since the royal forces—but let bygones be bygones. I am myself an Irishman, in the sense that I was born in the country and that all accounts (excepting that of Sir Robert Gordon) agree my ancestors were first called out of it—settling west of the high mountains of Ben Grime and Ben Clibrig—by that valiant and resourceful monarch, William the Lyon. I speak with modesty, but in the highlands the pine cut from the native forest is distinguished from the wood of the common or park tree. The King was engaged in a struggle of life and death. He had embarked on an adventure interlocked with the Gaelic heart, the driving of a holy passage through the foreigner, in his case those wicked tyrants, the Danes, who still stubbornly contested their foothold on the sacred soil of Scotland. The King's soldiers had suffered heavily. Men were wanted sure of sword-grasp, dependable, of tried success in blood-letting. Where within the whole Gaelic nation could he find what he wanted with so much advantage to himself as among my people? . . .

It was a tale always sweet to us in the telling. So then, leaving land and plough at the call of the blood, it had come that my ancestors crossed the narrow sea separating them from Scotland; and as such things happen, their work done, taking to themselves wives from among their kinsmen in that barren and stony country, they had settled there; the King granting to them those broad straths—adequate (as his means allowed) to their service—where we had since dwelt . . . but their hearts were in Ireland.

It was, as I have said, the summer of 19——. A truce had been declared. At last one was enabled to travel up and down through the island without graver risk than in my own sweet homeland around Evderacilis, ever washed by the low and gentle waves of its winding bays; for, though we have ever been playful with the dirk (we had need to be if our enemies were to be held in fear), yet my people had known comparative peace in their northern homes since the last of those yea-forsooth knaves, the robber MacLeods, had been murdered in cold blood, or driven out " slings upon their eyes "; a clemency of which my Uncle Ernest always maintained them to be undeserving.

Taking advantage then of the welcome lull, my desires turned to rest and an agreeable change. I had just placed to a work of little importance and much labour my signature. A man must occasionally climb out of and fill up the ruts in his brain, or perish. Luxurious travel is for the great. I wanted just a convenient spot with forgotten nooks about it, where, like Vertumnus, I could heave short to a single anchor; where in fact I might hold converse with people (if such yet lived) who asked for nothing

better than to be left undisturbed with ancient unsophisticated methods of mendacity.

Where was I to find this lilybud? As the frontiers of the earth draw in the flowers of the sun become ever more difficult to nourish. My experience, too, of travel was limited. If the root of an obscure word were puzzling you I might perhaps be able to provide an old coat it could lie down on, to hold up a taper that would shed light, welcome if only a glimmer. The woodman to his axe, the physician to his pill-box. You do not choose a crew of longshoremen to beat off on sudden emergency from a lee shore.

It was while my mind was framed in this fashion that I ran into an acquaintance. He is a man with the reputation of knowing where to look for anything in this world that is good. To be candid, he is a clergyman. I confided my predicament to him. He tossed it off like an aperatif.

"Nothing easier in life, Davidson," he said. "Get a bunch of illustrated journals, old stuff, on Wellington Quay. You will discover an Amhara in every one of them."

I was confounded by the simplicity of the thing. I am often painfully conscious I think remiss. Men like the Reverend Higgs command my admiration. They tear a rent in the tissue of the universe with the same facility I formerly lit a cigar.

He would not hear of gratitude. In his easy manner he brushed it aside.

"Send me a card," he said, laughing, waving his arms like a windmill. "The knowledge you are floundering about bathing your feet in the morning dew will refresh my soul."

It was on the side of irreverence, but Higgs is callow. He is still green in the Church. Youth is

in his feet. Chancing to turn his head as he spoke, he observed Donaldson coming up O'Connell Street from the Bridge. You know the kind of Dublin?

" You will excuse me, Davidson," he said, " won't you? I have an important engagement up town. I must be off."

It is Higgs's philosophy. If he cannot explain a difficulty, he gets out of reach of it. Nor could I very well blame him. Poor Donaldson is devastating. " The wise man," I said, " adapts himself to circumstances, as water takes the shape of the vessel that contains it." Slipping down Abbey Street I cut across the Metal Bridge to Wellington Quay.

I may mention that my interview with Higgs that morning was the commencement of the coolness that arose between us.

Here let an unaffected word be spoken about these second-hand booksellers of the Liffey. I thought of Dobell. I contrasted them with the learned hierophants who ply this sacred calling along the Quai Malaquais; those friendly philosophers who lend so gentle a lustre to France. Then, with a quick sense of pain, I recalled a vanished form—I speak of days when I pursued learning at its seat, in Dublin—the darting eyes, the close-cropped beard, the birdlike movements, the mocking, questing mind of the Prince of Booksellers. I looked across the river to where his convexed, cobwebbed window once swelled into opulence—it may be that I dreamed this—but as I looked, distinctly, a slender swarth figure flitted into the light, scanned the horizon, caressed its beard: then turning, it peered a moment through the window, and faded back away into the gloom of things. I bowed my head. Words touched my lips.

" Herr Hickey," I murmured, " dealer-in-wine,

sugar-refiner, sailor-before-the-mast, despiser-of-convention, and in the amplitude of thy fulfilment, bibliophile, sibi et amicis to us thurifers in thy temple, the revelation of thy genius may have lost some of its witnesses, but in the breast of one at least time will never blur thy attaching personality."

I steadied my thoughts a moment: then crossed from the kerb upon which I was standing to the low wall that overlooks the river.

"Surely never did Cambyses rule," I said softly, "over so strange, so heterogeneous a multitude; that temple, tapestried with the yearning out-thrust, the tears, the laughter, of this stupefying world, whose high-priest (like M. Godet Lateresse) once overflowed with an enormous, jovial vanity, yet beneath it concealed the soul of a Visionary."

The day was hot, a drowsy dead day; but the enthusiasm of my pursuit sustaining me I exhumed, and got together, some three stones dead-weight of Higgs's Journals. These I directed the carriers to call for. Then leisurely taking my way home on foot, I added to the pleasant fatigue of my limbs that realisation of one's inmost personality which comes from congenial occupation.

In the evening the journals arrived. I at once settled in to them. The earth now commenced to revolve for me to music. My relatives were forgotten. Every sour, ill-natured, waspish thing I had ever said slipped away. . . .

This world is a Serbonian bog of resigned illusions. Was it a poor kind of practical joke that Higgs had tried on me? For four days, and part of as many nights, I wandered through gallery after gallery of faces in search of his Amhara. Most of the faces must have been dead, for the journals themselves

were moth-eaten. I stared bewildered at them, galleries of gentlemen, countless upon countless thousands of them, landed men, shooting everything that can be shot from rapids to rhinoceros, cruising everything that could be cruised upon the Broads of fashion—faces beneath Ionic porticos, beneath pergolas of interlacing shade, beneath everything under the sun except humility, every man fronting a camera with ladies all named—all famous names perhaps—from left to right. I gazed at ladies with Alsatian wolf dogs; with flames smouldering in their battle eyes, with dresses all beads and chêvrons; on ladies, too, whose clothes and modesty both seemed missing. I draw a picture merely, yet as a truthful man I read those famous names, and Quetzalcoath or Tezcatlipoca convey more meaning to me. So this was fame. " If such be fame," I cried, " let a sufferer's curse clasp thee: though I bend the knee quivering with rage before thy temple's gate . . . I curse thee."

I heaved the whole pile into an empty sea-chest, hasped it, and by an exhaustive analysis of Higgs's character smoked myself back into comparative tranquility. Had I followed my own instinct and consulted Seale, my bookseller, a sober, steady man, I would by now have been across the many-crested hills which closed in the harbour of my desires.

I called on Seale next day. This excellent man is like a " place of lawns." Few travellers meet with more than one Seale on their journey to the Agrosumbra. Some people are skilled in window-dressing, practising it in even the most trivial hospitalities. However exercised it is a doubtful art. Seale practices real art. He is one of life's stage-setters. Let

me illustrate my meaning. Seale is severe on Christian civilisation; but only because all unfruitful things are distasteful to him. In general he is tolerant. He has a gentle tolerance of all frailty. It is natural to a man like him. Ask him to discuss with you the relativity of the convolvulus from the indivisible standpoint of that totality which is knowledge itself, and Seale would smile. But his smile leaves no sting in the heart. Devoted to his art, you are not ten minutes in his company until he has put you in love with life, that is to say with yourself; until he has decked you with these little chaplets which he weaves so cunningly, standing back from you to pass judgment upon their effect. This benignant man coals as it were your delight in yourself. He speeds up your happiness. He lets bow-windows into you. He sets you to triple measure and sends you off waltzing to your own Æolian.

"Come," he said, "come with me, Mr. Davidson, into my garden. For some reason it is slack with us in this trade between eleven and noon. Statia will make us coffee. I will see whether we cannot discover some ládybird, to deal with this little green-man of the cuckoo spit, who is troubling you."

I followed him into the room at the back of his shop, where a fire burned behind a fender of brass. Though I had often before peeped through the door, I had never previously stood within it. Now I understood its attraction. It resembled its owner. It was a cajoling room; for the furniture was so diminutive the room itself looked large. From one side a window opened, giving access to a garden. I drew in my breath. It was not much bigger, the whole of it, than a good sized carpet. Under a single sycamore

upon the furthest side was a wooden seat, painted white, half encircling a stone table. There was a border of flowering things around the walls. The walls themselves, framing the sky, were hung from top to bottom with the wax-like Solanum jasminoides, then in riot of bloom. The centre of this pleasaunce was green. Stepping into it was like stepping into the world—a cubit high—of William Allingham. The city might have been leagues away.

By slow degrees Seale drew me within the meshes of his beguilement. An hour had gone when I rose to take my leave.

" No, Mr. Davidson," he said, " we cannot fly in the face of nature. Too much burning of the midnight oil and the mind takes on those hearse-like fittings which, though they may lend dignity to the biographies of the dead, produce in the living—in the strongest of us—loss of that surety in ourselves which is half the battle. You must get into touch with a believer in absolutes. They are scarce in this country; but I have one. I will give him to you when we go inside. He is a man you may trust. To-night I will send you round some topographical histories."

I made no reply. If a man cannot speak the truth, let him keep silent. Seale's words recalled Higgs to my mind. We retraced our steps to the shop.

" This is the book," he said, removing some traces of dust from its upper edges; " it is called Health's Highway. It blows through you like the *Vento di Colico*. You will find the toll-houses on its way of incorruptible cedar."

It was a remarkable book. I wish to hurry on, but I must say one word for it. Seale was right. Opening as it were the throttle on the first page the author

never once lets out the clutch; yet, so gracefully does his text propel itself, through such zephyrs of "harmless merriment," into a land of such delicious aborigines, criticism is disarmed. The joy of the thing enters into you; the reward of emphatic statement in this dull world is attained.

"The natural life of man," says Mr. Mecredy, "should be one hundred and twenty years."

That was what the ordinary man should get out of the highway. My heart gave a lurch. If this were true, then every minute missed now was time misspent. The words seemed to leave behind them a verdurous silence. I became restless for Seale's topographies. I was like the bibber of wine who has tasted some new and unknown vintage. Tasting it, the mazer is drained: when the mazer is drained he knows himself a sinful man, glorying in his discriminations, who until that moment had not drunk wine.

There only remained now the choice of location. I had a bias towards Antrim, the bias of places associated with our immaturity. I was curious to know if the Macneill of Latharna still survived. I had an itching to redescend that neolithic shaft which leads down into the salt mines of Kilroot—the Kilroot of Varina. I desired to drink tea again in the Olderfleet. "Ah!" I exclaimed, "the Olderfleet"; for my last tea-drinking in that estaminet (though time had healed the wound) was still fresh in my memory. Priscille her parents had called her, a dainty baggage, with glints and shadows playing across her face; but a hussy, I am now convinced, more adept at just plain-kissing than any fine or honourable understanding of the hornbook.

We had crossed by the morning boat from Stran-

raer. By " we " I mean myself and the women of my party, for God usually surrounds those pleasing to Him . . . but better entomb the whole story. It is dead as mutton.

Antrim, every appeal of the blood, called to me; when suddenly the whole direction of my thought was changed. It came about through the Reverend Richard Hopkins Ryland. He came in Seale's parcel.

Ryland lived before the amazing American came with his dolabra to immolate us on the altar of banality. In his age, if a man set forth to travel he had a goal to achieve, if he sat down to write he had strong purpose in his soul. The cult of writing for the grace of movement had not been revived. So, just one hundred years ago, when this gentleman settled himself to arrange the history and antiquities of his native Decies, his hill-top idea was anger. He was filled with a holy anger. He raged that for three-quarters of a century this beautiful country of his birth—every valley of which called with songs to its hills—should have been allowed to lie fallow ; or where cultivation had been attempted, it should have been undertaken by palaverers, Englishmen of a type exceptionally objectionable to him. The history excited me. I watched it unfold sheet upon sheet. The fascination of what it left unsaid grew like a passion.

" The Saints now enlighten me what to do," I thought, for here was the very Amhara that rascal Higgs had spoken about. Here was a land where people (it was said) still believed in God, putting their belief in Him to daily practice; where artists with gaiters a l'eveque—with pointed beards too, perhaps, if I were lucky—might still be met with ; a land cheap to live in, history in the gateways of it, natives in the

heart of it, a certain epic grandeur circumventing it, and wild yet I made no doubt under the shell of it, for a wild goose, as they say in Kerry, never yet laid a tame egg.

Everything conspired to fix my resolve. I was hankering after solitude. Here was a country where it grew by the wayside. I love disputation : to study the struggle of insufficient opportunity with the great principles by which it is chained to its pay-envelope. Here lay a region where every hedge-inn was a nursery of Demosthenes. I wanted to hear in the hills the Voluntary that had filled the succession of centuries in this strange island. At my disposition was a territory where religion, not steamed as in a Non-conformist caladarium, was to be found bubbling up in wells of delicious, subdued emotionalism; here under the light openwork canopy of the thirty-nine articles, there under cool, dark semi-domes of Roman ashlar.

Dropping an old army scribbling book 129 into my haversack, I turned my back upon the birds of Gobbins, upon the hill-slopes of Slemish, upon the Sorly boy; and like the swallow stretched my wings to the south.

MacDAVID'S TOWN

The golden stubbles were studded with stooks of the late-reaped corn when, at a little place called Ballymacaw, I found myself before the first of these toll-houses, some surely of cedar, that were to give whatever of grace there may be to this search after the soul of a nation; for when I closed the last chapter of Ryland I knew there could be no rest for me until I had found the key to the mystery behind his pages.

Situate on the south-eastern coast of Decies, Ballymacaw, according to toponomists, is the encampment, or town, of the Son of David. It is a notable explanation. Before setting out to follow the rhythm of the road I had not heard of toponomists. I know them now. They are people whose business lies in sepulchral cultivation; the fruits being put up in tabloids attractive perhaps to the eye, but deadly to the understanding. In this town of the Son of David one hundred questions spring to the lips. Who was David? Where did he hail from? What was his son? When did he build this town? What were the humanities behind his resolve? How did it disappear? Is nothing known of the generations of its children? Would it be from the little cove below they set forth in search of the red gold? And the mothers of those fair-haired youths—what of them? Like Oisin, I poured my voice down the wind, but nothing

answered save the seabirds call " MacDavid's Town ! Toponomists ! " Toponomists ! drainers-of-their-strength from our legend makers; label-stickers who leave us groping for the flesh and blood of life amidst the dust of humanity.

The little hamlet was an appropriate starting point. Two miles to south lay the land's ending. Before me stretched the whole of Decies. The place itself, too, fitted into the picture Ryland had drawn of his native county. Grouped about a gorge, the more gently sloping side of which is covered with wind-worn alder and birch, the village had the kinship of all perdurable things. A few tarred boats were tethered on the shingle in which the cove ends to the sea. Midway in the rift, on the brink of the stream that purls through it, was a spring of water. To this spring the village descends. Scattered about on the roads converging on this point are a score of tiny white houses. The cove and tarry boats, and the wood and this well of poppling water, and the houses and riven trees, are Ballymacaw. The people are all Catholic by religion. Their church is at a place called Corbally, two miles away. The village has no temple. It is itself a temple. Above the wood to the south is an ancient manorhouse. It was built by a man called the Earl of Carrick. Across from it at the other side of the gorge is a coastguard station. The guards are gone, the coast derelict, the manorhouse mouldering to decay. That is the town-of-the-son-of-David, a real place. Men sleep here and wake up to quarrel, and doze off again. There is no spectacular colouring about the Town of the son of David, yet it gathers and holds the sunshine; and its elders will tell you that they would not change the easy manageableness of its days to be Kings of Spain.

I had come in to this hamlet quietly as the dew assembles on the grass. I might have parted from it in the same way, without observation, had not an accident caused me to stumble upon its two high vitalities, Tooke and Dagge. Tooke lives in a pleasant compound. His goats herd on the cliff. His bees make heather honey. He gathers many fish in his nets. When I first came upon him he was seated on the low wall which fences the road over the gorge to the sea. I gave him greeting, paying a tribute to the uncapturable beauty of the place, to the softness of the air. Strangers in Ballymacaw are opportunities not to be missed. He at once engaged me.

If it be true that every man has in him one book, the size of the book of Tooke would be double-elephant. But it would be more than a big book. Tooke has not hung his fiddle up to sleep. His tongue is salted with so rare a caviare, he has seen so many of the spice islands of the earth, he has made so much a part of himself the delight in big, burly words of an almost impossible appropriateness, it would be a book worth while. But actual conversing with him is not so easy. You are never quite sure whether to accept his words at their value or—using his idiom—to lay the finger on the nose : when in fact he is talking to the King, when only to the King's jester. As I finished my tribute to his village, half-unconsciously he looked down into the vent, as if there might perhaps be something below which he had missed.

" You know Dunmore ? " he said.

I told him that it was my intention to go there.

" Dunmore is called a harbour," he said, " this is a haven."

" Of rest," I ventured.

" We are wide awake as any in Pretenda."

I looked at him puzzled.

" By Rolling Eyes—out of Imbecility."

He hurled the words at me as if they came from a ballista.

" You don't mean to suggest," I said, believing I caught the drift of his thought, " that the mind of this nation is occulted."

" Occulted ! " his lip curled, " a lighthouse may be occulted. This land is a beacon, a warning; a nation of farce-fools, fed on Pretenda. The pretence of its wit, the pretence of a lot of old Kings and traditions that would put a clown out of business; the pretence we aren't what the eye in us proves, cunning foxes."

" Foxes may show good sport."

" The principal sport of an Irishman is to introduce another to the grand entrance of a workhouse; to take the gimp out of his backbone. You are a stranger to me, Sir. We don't know anything about one another; but let me tell you, there is no use to be laying your tongue to me about Irishmen. Unable to thread a screw, to rifle a bore, to drape an insult, an Irishman will set up to teach a master-of-craft."

" And yourself? "

" Some men are born to ill-luck. I didn't give birth to myself."

As well I thought argue with a corncrake. It seemed to me then that the man must have been fed on a diet of dillesk.

" You will have read botany?" he asked me presently.

I had no idea what he was driving at, but I nodded acquiescence. He supposed in that case I understood the unification of the endarch.

" I am afraid that I cannot say that I do," I replied.

" I cannot claim more than a gardening acquaintance with any science."

" The law of the unification of the endarch," he said, " is of universal synchronisation. In man, to produce perfect florescence, the pulp of pastime must be unified with the working fibro-vascular tissue of labour. In this country, when the hot-gospellers of Pretenda have put a plaster finish on it, there will be neither pulp nor pastime."

He lowered the pent-houses which surmount his eyes, scrutinising me as if he were examining a target. I know now that Tooke was a sailor. It no doubt accounted for the bluntness of his speech. But he must be a dumpish, sour, disgruntled fellow who would not be pleased with this man's pleasure in himself. It was like this. Tooke works according to a pharmacopeia. You introduce your topic. He examines, numbers, indexes it : then taking down the bottle appropriate to the case, from his mental surgery he gives you a final searching glance of the eye, measures out a certain number of drops, dilutes them, and hands you out the mixture. He may not have read Galen in the original, but there is nothing more to be said. He corks your ignorance in the bottle. Occasionally, of course, when he comes up against a difficult case in obstetrics there are transcendant moments. But he delivers the goods. His principles however were more difficult to follow. They seemed to respond like a universal joint to every passing emotion. Excepting skulduddery, of which he declared them exempt, he did not play softly on the black and white keys of his countrymen. But he shifted his ground with such ease that the best comparison I can make with him is to a pillar, a column of composite order; of which you will suppose the

base to be Zinovief, the shaft Samuel McGuffin, the capital Pius XI. The fact is, as I was soon to learn, Ireland is a peculiarly difficult place. It is the only country in the world where the flexibility of expressed opinion is rivalled by the inflexibility of secret conviction. A stranger is rudderless.

When we had conversed together for a good hour, without any unnecessary ceremonial, he informed me that his dinner was ready. With an expression of pleasure at our meeting, I proceeded down the steep hill to the cove. Where the road ends beyond the bridge I looked back. Tooke was just starting for his compound. He had delayed to reduce me to my component parts. You have no doubt one time or another experienced the sensation. My only objection to it is its power of opening the sealed doors of the mind.

DAGGE

In this cluster of insulated roofs which was once MacDavid's town there is a publican named Dower. He will never be painted by Augustus John. He accepts the fact loyally and no more about it. But if his taciturnity be hereditary his ancestors were well named. Over a bottle of stone ginger I asked him if there were many birds in these parts. Had I enquired from him why the sea breaks he could not have manifested deeper surprise. His jaw dropped. Pullets in the springtime of the year, geese at the Michaelmas, turkeys in Yule, the Three-Swallows on the shelf behind his back, these he knew.

" There's a fellow by the name of Dagge," he said, pointing up the road after a pause, " beyond in Coolum——" His mind choked further utterance. As I stumbled out the door I heard him muttering to himself " Birds ".

I found Dagge trimming the hedge which borders the deep-set lane leading past his home. There was the finger of a Chesterfield upon the work. The rareness of this particular artistry in Ireland at once interested me. " This will be the man," I said, " whom I have come out to find."

There are points of correspondence in Dagge and Tooke. Both possess individuality : both are masters

of humbug. But in the great qualities of character they have little in common. Even in their humbug they are different. The humbug of Dagge is from within, bubbling up like beads on old wine; the humbug of Tooke is exogenous. Dagge is at that period in life when, having topped the highest part of the mountain, all one's ambitions tucked away in various parts of the draperies about his person, he is ready to commence sliding gently down the further side. Before this period (I may perhaps be indulged in excluding myself) men are callow; their minds are in short-clothes. Except under necessity they should be left to mingle among themselves. But I think Dagge must have been always wise. As I came round upon him, he was whistling for himself a solemn sort of tune like church music. The day was salamandrous. He had laid aside his coat and hat. The sun was beating down almost vertically upon his head.

"You run a risk," I said, "going without your hat upon a day like this. Our brains are delicate things."

He released his left hand from the shears he was operating with, allowing them to drop slowly to his right side, at the same time turning himself so as to face me squarely.

"You speak kindly," he said, "but this world is full of empty words as the tongue of a dishonest man with prayers." He swung the shears up until they pointed at the hedge. "You don't think I would be doing that," he said, "if I had brains."

That is Dagge. He lacks mediocrity. Living alone in a windy arbour over the sea, there is a screen of timber on one side of his house—the sheltered side. He has land enough to provide for his frugal wants. He tills of it as little as possible. He will never "lay

at the feet of a grateful country his tribute of greater and better cultivation." He has nothing to lose that even a Workers' Republic would be justified in taking from him, and nothing to gain. He is unresponsive to the war cries of the redeemers of humanity. No city will ever confer its freedom on him. His essence will never be forfeited. His position secures him. He will always be just Dagge of Coolum, stirred by the elemental things. Living here alone a life of primitive adventure, he finds in it an approximation of happiness. He might be completely happy but for a vanishing, reappearing gossamer that constantly torments him, tangling his path.

Coolum he said was a poor place. The land was cold. There was good land across the road but it was not his. This statement is stripped from its context. What he meant me to understand was, not that he coveted his neighbour's vineyard—there is nothing of that in Dagge—but that whatever I found missing about him, he would regard it as friendliness if I remembered his limitations. Delight in nature, scorn of the mockery upon all sides of him, he wanted to give expression to these things with sureness and grace; but his limitations cramped his tongue and spoiled his peace. Bossuet experienced this in another way. He tells us that he had no attachment to riches, yet possessed only of a bare sufficiency he felt himself narrowed. Conceive Dagge a scholar, stirred by some deep emotion, rolling off sonorous anapaests, and you have the picture of a perfectly contented Dagge, the sakhari in his heart appeased. As things were however, like the excellent philosopher that he is, he drops a silent tear and goes on with his business; for he has three excellent gifts. He

recognises fundamental values; he has a genius for titivating what he does say; he has cultivated the friendship of birds. His friendship for birds was a revelation. Like Tooke he is a pillar, but in his case there is no confusion about its order. He is an Avian pillar around which all the birds of the air wheel in perpetual tapering flight. Take his gifts in order. Going afield each morning and returning at night, he has gone on doing so almost since he can remember. Occasionally he may grout. Digging in the soil is not like sunrise among the Sabine hills; but his knowledge of values saves him from any thickening of the brain, while his skill in titivating his speech —that *argute loqui,* that untrained faculty of the tongue which is like no other experience—puts a scroll around the morning and evening of each day for him. Finally, birds. A robin he told me breakfasted with him on the kitchen table most half the days of the year.

" The little spideog of a rascal," he said, " he does be on the sill of my window before I get on my trousers in the morning, chirruping in his neck."

" Ah," I said, " the robin ! The bit bird of Saint Sylvanus; the messenger of hospitality."

" Ay, hospitality. If I had the strength of words coming from me I'd tell you about the Bright Powers that warm the breast in him. He is the sacredest little bird in all the whole of Ireland. Wasn't it a robineen was the companion of our first parents, when they were turned out of their property without the mercy of God? Wasn't it wee robins was the birds that used to come and perch on the cow's ears that the Queen's daughter brought with her to Ireland; warbling into their lugs while they milked, so that their lady might have the most famous milkers in the

world? Wasn't it a robin that pulled the sorest thorn out of the Saviour's head on that Friday, when the Jews put Him up on that blasted rampike and tried to kill Him? And the drop of blood that spurted out! when the sense is in our eyes, isn't it there on his breast to this day?"

With him this was natural speech; for Dagge neighbours birds close to his heart, investing them with an enormous charming solemnity. When he learned the nature of my business he laid aside his shears, and getting his hat and coat at once accompanied me.

Cloonliamgowl, the shallow inlet hollowed out of the coast of Coolum, our destination, signifies the haven of "William the foreigner." The tradition is that some followers of this monarch, third of his name, mistaking their course, put in here. It was twelve miles across wild country to Waterford. The times were unsettled. Tradition is silent as to what became of them. The Gaelic name perpetuates the incident. The coast here is minatory and inspiring. There is no surprise when Dagge tells you that on the ness to north the peregrine falcon builds her eyrie. Indeed the feature of this littoral is its bird life: redshanks, murrs, cormorants, choughs, ravens, the dainty *ridibundi* (a wicked poacher, it is said), even the rare petrel—the stormy fellow. Suddenly Dagge caught my arm.

"You are in luck, Sir," he said in his courteous way, pointing first to a bird—a widgeon he said it was—planing south: then up over where we stood. "They're just riz; from the cliff yonder."

"Falcons?" I queried.

"Falcons," he assented, "hawks. Watch."

They were no more than specks. Suddenly one

stooped, dropping like a stone. You could almost hear the impact. Then it swooped, seizing its prey upon the fall and soared, mounting spirally, until it seemed it must pass entirely from our range of vision. I heard a call-note. Dagge tightened his grip upon my arm. There was to be a second act. Down through the pulseless air something was tumbling. I had lost memory of the second hawk. Anchored in mid-air, his life within his awesome sight, I saw him now. Next instant the whirling feathers had been seized, both falcons swept into the hollow of the cliff, and were seen no more. It was a superb theatrical display.

" Doth the hawk soar by thy wisdom ? "

As I write down the words I am thinking of Dagge. Here, but for those limitations, had been his opportunity. " Yes, Sir," I might have heard him exclaim, only the awns of his tongue would be tipped by genius, " these people whose minds are narrowed to the chicaneries of gain, to the debilities of their repetition pursuits, I would have them gaze into the falcon's eyes. Pasque-Dieu ! what they would behold. I am not the adjuster of the cosmos. It may be that capitalism must survive, until organised society has found some better means to co-operate than using the earner's surplus to oil the wheels of luxury. God understands his world. But when the devil threw his cast of vultures, Group-activity and the Business Christian, against the wind, all that the spirit of falconry stood for fell from its high estate : Satan's trickery of rightly-co-ordinated-industrialism closed over the soul's divine multiplicity." What Dagge actually did say was : " The devil stiffen them vagabonds who come around here robbing the eggs and the young birds."

This coastal denudition continued year by year, pursued with impunity, openly, in many instances by men of central position, is surely a grave offence against one's country. Nor is the joy the dappled beauty of these fearless birds lends to our shores the only loss. Dagge knew what he was talking about. Some small damage the hawk may do. In a lean winter a chicken does not come amiss. But though our Department of Agriculture has no means to estimate the benefits they confer, the wholesale insect erosion that a few falcon families will arrest in a countryside, in one single season, is not less certain.

It was a corking day, a day of memories. We did not enter the canyon where the great chests of treasure are known to be hidden : but together we traversed the whole spur of mainland, now scrambling over rocks saffron-stained with the *physcia paristina,* now sinking ankle-deep in yielding sward, now hot upon the fox's trail, now ear to cave drinking in the regurgitations of the tide far up in its vaulted caverns ; those caverns which pierce and re-pierce this iron coast that drives its bulwarks deep into the sea indifferent—indifferent as Dagge—whether Brunswicker or Gael rule or misrule within its impassive barriers. All day he poured into my ears the wealth of Selborne. Most excellent philosopher ! long may he reign in his windy arbour, amid his birds and perished crops, and artistry.

THE ACQUIRING OF DINOCLUS

With the coming of the day of my departure the sun swung up into the sky a globe of fire. It was to be another mosquito day. So far I could not claim to have made much progress on my quest, yet . . . was I walking the battlements of my castle in Castille or did I catch already, faint yet unmistakable, the strains of a measured music, a music that had stayed beautiful through the years?

Hastening breakfast, I made my way down to the cove for a last farewell. Only the foam of the faithful sea now bore tribute to it, yet what days it had lived through! What hopes had kindled behind the eyes that looked through these diminutive headlands! What strange men had foregathered here! What contraband it had cherished! What gun-running witnessed! What ankers of brandy welcomed, with shouts at the dawn of day! We cannot all be noblemen and pirates of Penzance, but we may all enjoy from the seclusion of our respectability the crack of the devil's whip in the world without. Fillibusters they were, vagabonds of the seas, but no braver body of men ever lived: and one blasphemy they were not guilty of, they never flew the pennant of an unclean righteousness from their masthead.

"During the war with the English," said

Napoleon, speaking of the French *maltotier,* " they were the ear of my army. They are a people who have the courage and ability to do anything for money."

Peace with them . . . if they have gone.

This morning the haven held only the contraband of Wulfhoofsluth—the Lord of the Beast—who hath this land. A herd of cattle, sleek, stupid, indolent, that should have been upturning the good earth, had strayed down and stood among the rocks and in the stream that flows under the bridge. A few, more daring than the others, had entered the sea, where the wavelets made pretence of breaking over their clumsy feet. It was a picture from Alexander Williams only with deeper markings. I envied Tooke. It rippled all my emotions at parting from him, and from Dagge and big Trainor, and Dower, yes, and from the nettle of the parish too, old—but no!

Inscrutable fortunate people of Ballymacaw it is true that content twines and re-twines like some giant liana around your heart. True also that this glimmer, this opusculum of gipsy-blood, will never reach your hands; yet everlasting reproof were my portion did I divulge what the name sounds like which is upon that stinging herb. Besides, had I not learned, even in the brief hours of my sojourn in this dorp of the veld, the heart which his sharp tongue guards?

As I descended the hill into Dunmore the clock of the manor house was striking the mid-day hour. The road I followed had brought me out on the wide causeway which, translated, means the road-of-the-haunt-of-the-little-birds. This road, starting from the Church of the Protestants, stretches eastward, uniting the upper and lower hamlets. I stood in the middle of it looking about. The place was inhabited

I knew, for the painting on the houses was fresh; and there was the chiming of that clock. What then was amiss? Had I come in at the siesta? Were the people under gesa? Or had I strayed into a land prostrate beneath some stupendous enchantment? Except for the steamers with their long trails of smoke out beyond the great spearhead of Hook, the place was deserted. I went down a laneway overlooking a shingled beach and listened to the tide then incoming. Tall trees were clambering down to the water's edge. I thought of that great padre, père Labat, and his island of Grenada, the island of the summer of eternal fruits; for surely "Beauty here is exhausted."

I had been in this unreal village some three or four days when the temptation of Tooke recurred to me; for Tooke, I may as well confess, is responsible for the flamboyance of Dinoclus. He it was who first directed my mind into the channel of asses. Now, if you have chanced recently to be turning over the pages of Louis Stevenson, you may by the same lucky accident have happened upon the passage where, the preparations for his journey through the highlands of the Midi complete, he found himself burthened with an outfit beyond human porterage. The situation demanded reflection. There were objections to a horse. A horse is too strong on his speed. He is too restive and valuable ever to be left alone. A man setting out on a voyage with a horse is harnessed to the brute. There were formidable objections to a horse. "What I wanted," he says, "was something cheap and small and handy and all these requisites pointed to a donkey." The more I thought over Tooke's suggestion the stronger my conviction of its inevitableness grew.

I will set down the adventure in my own way.

In Dunmore you will see ladies—old in the sense they are not young—stop, peer down, stoop, and annex something from a hedge. It excites no comment. They are botanising. To-morrow they will be enriching with rare marine specimens the treasure-houses of their mind. These things are of its rights seigniorial. And as summer swings into position richer fare, well shaped all over, is inmixed. But why try to hide it? This beautiful village is given body and soul to a form of joy-bote, of religious incantation, apt to put a man's social lights out in what sometimes is called, even by the elect, "two shakes of a lamb's tail." How then, if those entitled to its cozening were stripped to the sacrifice, could a mere searcher after the Four Winds hope for immunity? Besides my actions afforded no clue to what I was after. The country was honeycombed with generals. It was seething with secret agents. It had become the hunting ground of post-war bachelors, pining, if the tocher were right, to become Benedicts. It was filled with frustrated men of action of every kind. I will never know the suspicions aroused during the days that followed; but whatever they were, asses had become life to me. At all sorts of odd times I was to be seen staring steadily into the fields in the neighbourhood, apparently at nothing, but in reality with all the faculties of my mind focussed on these fascinating quadrupeds; for I had never before observed the remarkable divergence that exists among different members of the species in my own country. At last I marked down my quarry. Then, lacking experience in the buying or selling of live stock, I cast about for a go-between. Luck favoured me. There was a man called Perch to whom the united judgment of the community gave it up that

he was the person of whom I was in search. I found him at home and explained my business.

"You did well," he said; "no one should separate from his cash without a friend."

A citizen of the world at large, Perch in his time had been engaged in herding prisoners at Puebla, on lumbering in Canada, hunting the sperm whale in the South Sea; the sea in truth was as much his country as his island home. Perhaps it was all a traveller's tale, that he was just entertaining himself at the expense of my credulity; but there was one thing about him to which I can bear testimony: he had a gift of whistling that might have qualified him for the Directorship of an Aviary. He could take an aria and tip-toe with it around the rafters of his mouth until Pavlova stood before you. Loose-jointed, with a tongue to match his ear, an eye that I would not care to meet at the end of a rapier, and a skin of the tint of southern men, Perch, amidst the bituminous reek of the Middle Ages might have left a remarkable streak behind him. But what was more to the point at the moment he knew asses, as I knew the Royal Warrant on Pay and Allowances when I followed the line. He entered at once into the spirit of my business. The particular ass I had determined if possible to acquire proved to be the property of a Miss Henry, a little lady with an unwinking eye rather disposed to brokerage. The ass himself bore the unusual name of Dinoclus.

Perch started the negotiations, regulating their speed according to the niceties of his humour. The responsibilities of liberty had not yet stripped rural Ireland bare of its insouciance.

Tantae molis erat Hibernian condere gentem!

But all things must have their end and appointed passing, and so a time came when even the joyous goings back and forth of Perch had to reach their conclusion. One sunny afternoon then, in a pleasant field within the fold of a high wood we found ourselves, Miss Henry, myself and Perch, assembled and prepared to come to grips.

After some irrelevant conversation I remarked that the animal was, I feared, slender. I had not any objection to him on that account, but felt it was expected from me to raise some difficulty. Miss Henry explained that he had been suffering for a time back from indigestion. I had not thought of indigestion previously in connection with an ass, and was at a loss to reply. Perch took the situation in hand.

" You haven't been to Pottstown? " he asked genially, fixing his soft, drab, sugar-loaf-crowned hat a degree back on his head.

" I have not," I admitted, " but I know Coxtown. I came from Ballymacaw by Coxtown and down the hill past the church."

" Pottstown is in the U.S.," he replied briefly. " I worked there."

At this stage he went over and stroked Dinoclus, whistling some bars of the *Poloma* so slow and in such faultless tune, that the ear trembled lest stopping he might leave a cadence incomplete. He tipped Dinoclus with an outstretched finger.

" He is a little swift," he said, " but it is a fault on the right side."

He looked at Miss Henry, but the arrow of his discourse was directed at me.

Then picking up *Poloma* again, he proceeded to walk, head bent, around the animal. This inspection

apparently satisfied him; for, crossing his feet and resting the palm of his hand squarely upon one of its rear portions, he fluted the final hushed notes of his distracting melody. It was very wonderful. There might have been a nightingale in his throat.

" No," he said unexpectedly, as if he had just completed a baronial census of asses in his mind, " there is not another skin in the twenty parishes I would lay alongside him."

He cast a quick final glance at the fetlocks and, turning to me, " Just now I spoke of Pottstown, Sir," he said. " In the Hydro United there we made a tyre, the Torson-Expansion. If you happen to know anything about the nature of tyres, the Torson is the nearest thing to a New Testament this side of the Jordan. Stone-bruise, rim-cut, blow-out—poof! " He blew out his mouth to signify that you could drive the tyre over the Colorado desert, and it would come out improved.

" I know an ass, Mr. Davidson," he said, " when I see him," and for a moment . . . but I must cure myself of this susceptibility.

" What I was going to say," he continued, " is on the big proposition side, but I am speaking to a gentleman. I would give a Hydro Torson guarantee with that wee donkey. He's plain. There is no dressing-up on him. But he is like the Torson, smooth, callous to weather, and gives continuous service. You'll be lucky if Miss Henry parts him."

I was rather surprised by his ending. As our business in the field was to decide whether I was prepared to pay the animal's rate of exchange, I found difficulty in understanding what he meant.

" Is he young? " I asked incoherently.

" That's the only trouble with him," he replied.

" He's an infant. If he were older he'd be less affectionate."

I advanced, copying Perch, with the object of laying my hand as he had done, on the same portion of the animal. It had struck me as a business-like-looking thing to attempt; but as I came near, he moved forward.

" His tail," I said, for the first time realising the fact, " it does not seem the proper length."

My discomfiture was transparent. Before Miss Henry could reply, Perch was speaking.

" A tail grows inside a few months," he said. " It is a matter of opinion. Myself I fancy a cutty sark."

He spoke with an easy nonchalance. I supposed sark to be some colloquialism for tail. He did not explain. After all I was only a stranger. But the trouble with the tail of Dinoclus, as it hung, was that it was neither long nor short. It was neither hot nor cold. I pointed this out, enquiring what had happened. A few weeks before a company of tinkers—in assertion it appeared of some ancient right—had cut off the bushy end of Dinoclus's tail. It was it seemed a more or less common occurrence. It would have betrayed ignorance to show further surprise.

For twelve pounds, less luck penny, donkey, trap, harness, and what Miss Henry called a hurricane-lamp—to be hung from a contrivance on the port bow—passed into my service.

PART II

THE COTE DECIES

"If only Ireland were not Catholic—but then perhaps she would not be Ireland."

"Children of Men! The unseen Power whose eye
For ever doth accompany mankind,
Hath looked on no religion scornfully
That man did ever find."

BY THE SIGN OF THE HOLY BOTTLE

EVEN as Ahasuerus rode into the desert out of the land of Egypt so (by the advice of a fallacious policeman), instead of going quietly around the road, I decided, in all the opulence of my new possessions, to drive up into Tramore by the Great Strand from Rhinéshark. He said it was not usually done; but I would find it a striking experience. I did.

All went well until I reached Rhinéshark. Here I found myself confronted by an unfordable river. I have been told there is a ferry. There may be, but if you had a voice like the storm it would have been no good this day to you. Three or four boats were drawn up on the sand, but so far as human beings are concerned the place was empty. Ideas are strangely associated. I thought of flies. In front of a set back like this it is possible to understand the feelings of flies at the approach of winter. The warmth leaves you. There is, however, this to be said for present pressing exigency. The mind ceases its useless turmoil. We obtain a respite from the future.

Tying Dinoclus to a nog or wooden peg convenient to the shore, I gained and turned back along the road I had come out. My plans were upset. I went on, not heeding distance, and had reached the point where the road passes under the belfry—a most astounding structure—of the Church of the Catholics,

the belfry as it is called of the contending townlands, when I heard the grind and roll of wheels as of lumbering artillery. I stopped. If troops were on the march I was in a convenient place. By stepping inside the churchyard I could witness their pageant and myself escape observation. But something entirely different was to present itself. Over the crest of the hill came two, three, four gigantic caravans, the ears of each of the eight horses encased in red caps. On this lonely road it was astonishing. In advance of this wagon train was a very remarkable individual. Had he been attended with standards, surrounded by a bodyguard, I might not have been more surprised. Travelling hatless with a long whip in his hand, he was a man of altogether telling appearance. He was, I think, the tallest man, not of abnormal stature, I had ever seen. Besides his galways, to the end of a long, handsome face was attached a lustrous black goatee, matching his hair, his frock coat, and the gaiters which were about his legs. His vest, but does not Sam Weller tell us that there is no accounting for a gentleman's taste in waistcoats? As he descended the rise, advancing in his direction, I hailed him. By a sign he arrested the progress of the train. Then turning, he saluted me with his whip and smiled, a marvellous smile, like the sea in sunshine after storm, all embossed silver taking the heart out of you. But perhaps it is his trade. I explained my difficulty, requesting if he knew the country what it might be best for me to do.

He congratulated me upon my signal fortune.

" My father," he said, " was a river pilot. I was reared on the water. Before I knew my letters I had practised rafting as a fine art. How far is this place? "

I told him it lay about a mile from where we stood. Detailing Barnum, his second van, to accompany us, without more ceremony we set off on foot. He was, he said, a monologist. For a moment I mistook his meaning.

" I can show thirty-one days—sacred on Sabbath—without repeating," he explained, " but I prefer movement." He stopped suddenly, turning in the direction of the great bay. " This is a rare country, Sir," he said. " Its distances are so easy, its roads so untroubled, its prospects so ravishing. Look at that seascape!" He stood wrapped in contemplation for a good sixty seconds. " What I was saying," he turned swiftly, bowing to me with grave courtesy, " was that I seldom tarry in one place beyond three nights. The people are too generous with their small money. Besides the living germ is movement."

He spoke with impressment. All his horses he told me were called from illustrious mountebanks. His caravans were named after famous showmen. Had he said the word, I might have yoked Dinoclus to his pomp and made a full-try-out of it; for he had lived so much passing through little towns and villages he had imbibed the whole of philosophy, the secret to temper the severity of life with joyous, courtly conversation. At Rhinéshark the strength of the current surprised him.

" It must run to twelve knots nearing the ebb," he judged. He had not been to the point before, but believed he had heard of the place; something about silver bass. " Good sport, bass," he said, " money too, if you are in luck. Fishing with a spinner and long line, with a fresh run a man may hook fast as he can draw."

He laid his plans without a second's hesitation. Lashing together a number of wooden planks to form a deck or union of two boats—in the manner, he informed me, practised among the Tonga Indians—we first loaded the trap; then, clubbing our united strength, we lifted Dinoclus on to it. Again the current puzzled him a moment; but within the hour from our first meeting he was waving me good-bye from the further bank. "Nobel," he said, was his name, "Nobel of Africa." Nobel he was, a prince of highwaymen, an Augustan; but a most destructive man to work. The manner in which he assembled that raft, navigated it, debarked Dinoclus, hustled his crew, dismantled and reloaded his properties, and disappeared in a column of dust around the bend of the road and out of my life, was—to one who loves work, loves to see it grow beneath the eye, undesecrated, to whom it is full of meanings as the unending to and fro of the sea—it was disturbing.

In Decies, Tramore, or the Great Strand, is believed to have miraculous origin. You can find one version of the legend in Dr. Hyde's translations from the Gaelic. I do not think I would like to go quite the full length of that legend; but I confess I know of no other strand exactly like it. Lying two miles within the iron promontories of its treacherous sea, conceive it—un sable d'or vierge—a strand of virgin gold, level as the brain of a bishop, broad as the Milky Way, hard as Bran the iconoclast, against which for centuries tempests have hurled themselves in impotent fury. That is the great strand. But Tramore, the ville, is not so worthy. It seemed to me a place that only the wind raves about. So little indeed am I enamoured of it that I would sit seven times seven years the other side of that river at Rhiné-

shark, without thinking once of crossing over to it. It has a race-course, as I was to discover. But in general, its distractions are fatuous: its Metal-man a futility: its environs desultory: its antiquities negligible: its history parochial: the prospect from the steps of its Great Hotel, the prospect from Engeddi across the Dead Sea.

Is this pistoling it at sight? Very well then; I will be just. Even to the florin there are two sides, the obverse and the side which says "Evil to him who evil thinks." I will speak three things for it.

One. It is the only coast town in these two islands where the sport of Vikings, surf-boating, could be raised to a passion; an unearned increment, lying waste amidst the route of ferro-concrete dance halls.

Two. It was witness to a deed of heroism at least not excelled in the annals of the sea. At Brownstown I fell in with a veteran of the American Civil or Slave War, whose father had been present at the rescue—in which the lifeboat used was a grey mare. It was a November day. In the morning there had been a swell running that there was not enough wind to explain. By mid-day, without a moment's warning, the storm broke, with breakers green-curving, combing the bay. Suddenly into the picture loomed a ship, on a voyage now that would have no return. It is a tale of the splendour of youth. No boat could go the length of an oar into the teeth of that wind and tide. Women knelt on the sands in prayer, their men their hands helpless beside them: then, hatless, rain-drenched, thundering down the wind, the dawn upon his face, came Youth; and throwing the end of a rope to those on shore, rider and horse plunged into the maddened sea. The name of the youth—a plain name enough as names go in Ireland—was Brien.

Joining the navy later he came as coastguard in after years to his native place, and lived to a ripened age. The name of the vessel was the *Marie,* Bordeaux. Captain and crew were saved.

Three. Some dull fellow had called this town the "Garden of Ireland," and the meaningless description sticks. But in a curious, listlessly arranged history of Decies, compiled by a gentleman named Egan, packed with a wealth of information, you may find the following: "Our county, wanting Tramore, would be like an Indian god without the wonted diamond in his forehead; a region of ancient fame wanting the spot of modern colouring, which enchants the superficial traveller and lures the society pilgrim in search of health and pleasure." Strong waters! but is Tramore not a place of strong waters? Moreover the appreciation is one shared in by tens of thousands, the tens of thousands—society pilgrims or superficial travellers—who annually pour into this little summering place, with an energy never equalled by Pantagruel in his search of the Holy Bottle. Their allegiance is hereditary. Amidst the hitches of life they cling to it as a mariner to a rope. What is the lure? Is it health . . . or the Holy Bottle?

I will go even a step further. If my judgment is agley, put the blame on the Twelve Pins. The man stands like a Colossus across my vision of this little town.

It was at the Grand Hotel in Tramore that I met the MacOgilvie of the Twelve Pins. He had at once drawn my attention. A tall man, groomed like a racehorse—racing accounted for his presence here—there was (blood of a kind perhaps) a sort of grandiloquence combined with the plenitude of good cheer about him that commanded attention. I tell the story

around him so that it may not be forgotten; because, to me at least, he is the link between two civilisations: one, the brilliant era which has closed; the other, that has taken the day from it. Of the latter it is for those qualified to speak. I am not *juris utriusque doctor*. But of the civilisation for which in-a-way this gentleman stood, its shield was azure with bend and seven martlets *or*, flexed . . . but it mattereth little now how it was flexed. Some men like woman in her older, more abandoned, years; for out of an old fiddle it is said cometh good music. Some like old wine, and if the day be sultry and the wine drawn from a cool well, who will gainsay them? With me neither new opinion, nor false lying tale, will ever bring me to hard judgment of those olden days. The flavour of the cotillon surrounds them. From stress to stress they passed down their splendid dithyramb. Clustering nuts they were. Empty nuts they are now; but all the heart of love is in me for every one of them. Beauty attended the folding and unfolding of their days. Gentlemen carved the acanthus leaves upon them. Now all are gone, och, ochone! John Peel. The thick honey, the hospitality, the aura of an Ireland that was a land of rainbows to the whole wide world—the long clouds are over them. Clowns sometimes claim clanship with them, but that cannot alter them. And what, in the name of History! have we put in the stead of them. *Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine*. But the strength in me is not what it was. I must be careful. I do not desire to go into exile.

We had dined well and were sitting on the stoup or veranda that, overlooking the roofs of an old nest of houses, gives to the great caravanserie a suggestion of the Levantine Riviera. Suddenly he (The

Twelve Pins) turned towards me. His face seemed in some way to have undergone an alteration since dinner. It was more like an oil painting, more chin about it.

" It's a hell's puzzle," he drawled, talking down now to me from the top of things, " how you can bring yourself to go around in that travelling mustard-pot," meaning Dinoclus and the trap, " seeing the state to which those hickers have brought our country. A man with your accent is liable to be taken for a spy, probably shot, even with a truce."

I was nettled. My attachment to my native land may be an abstraction ; nevertheless it is like the feel of a spade, the implement of life and death, in my hand. To-day the men referred to as " hickers " are the State. Yesterday the noble Obregon ruled : to-morrow . . . but to-morrow is beside the point. Besides his personal reference was an intolerable liberty. I felt the elements of my nature becoming cold. A certain cordiality had sprung up between us. " An indigestion," says Hazlett, " is an excellent commonplace for two people who have never met before." It had been so with us. But nothing that had passed at dinner warranted this licence. All that Seneca says for philosophy holds good. A gentleman learns to abstain, to endure : he learns the restraint of the divine Epictetus. But there are times when resentment becomes a duty. This man bore an honoured title. " Very well," I said, " so did Nero." Personal dignity is man's birthright. When the history of Soviet Russia comes to be written, it will be found that insolence—and insolence alone—was both the remote and proximate cause of that demarche. The frosty pomposity of this friend of our Lord, the King, was unendurable. I

recalled to my mind an observation he had made earlier in the evening, which in my easy way I had allowed to pass. With an ingenious pertinacity he had extracted the information from me, that I filled trenchard and tankard, as best I might, by my abbreviatures—by the pursuit of that daedal wandering which is the slow decay of hope—only to use the knowledge thus gained in gibes at what he called "the palliasse class." The middle class need no apologist. They are what they are. But what right had this person—a man of no occupation if you except play-acting with land, ignorant of one detail probably of the true elegance of living, unable, I now convinced myself, to wrap the penury of his thought even in tattered metaphor—what right had he to animadvert or put anyone in any class? I was fearfully annoyed. It is a purely personal idiosyncrasy, but I change my entire opinion of people according to events. "This man," I said, "What was he? What was he indeed? Ha, ha!" . . . I checked myself, repeating over the formula of Epictetus. . . . But my passions were whirling again next moment; that dogged ridicule and scorn of each other which mark our national character had me in their grip.

"Tomboon on him," said I, "with the horn of the unicorn upon his wind-swept forehead! What right had he to speak of hickers? Out of what sort of a tinker's drain did a name like MacOgilvie issue? The curse of my seven ancestors! What call had he to comment on my accent?"

The mere sight of him shaping as a proper person now became insupportable. Yet before he escaped it was my duty to ram him, to ram him hard. But how? The flick of a Beerbohm were wasted on him.

The man had the hide of an ox, the length of a giraffe. I needed something swift, something that would search a vulnerable part, something he would feel without knowing how it hit him. I cast about in my mind and thought of Cambrensis. I had discovered in the fellow—strange enough—a weakness for the freemasonry of letters. " Cambrensis," said I, " is just the man for a case of this kind. If he does not dive under his counter and come up smiling on the other side, if Cambrensis does not unhorse him, no one could." Cambrensis is always safe. You can attach anything to him and not one in the entire population could contradict you offhand; not one in a hundred has heard of him; not one in a hundred thousand has read him. I was now at war with this man. All methods are justified in war.

" You are unfair to your countrymen," I said; " the attachment of the Irish to law and justice attracted even the attention of Cambrensis."

I spoke a few balanced words to the learning of that ecclesiastic, suppressing—God forgive me—the real truth about him. Then I made belief to quote him, rubbing in some subtle touches on the foundations of knowledge. I was watching his face closely. I could see it bridling. Then ending as I had begun with the law. " You cannot get behind Cambrensis," I concluded. " The law of Ireland was ever in primis nobilis. If practised in Hell it would subvert Beelzebub."

His eyes might have been death-rays. He was completely rattled.

" Your Cambrensis must have been either a damn fool or a rogue then," he riposted. " The only law to which the rustics of this country were ever

attached is lynch law. The only law they will ever understand is the boot."

I was taken aback. I did not expect this sword-play. The untruth of his retort did not blunt its sharpness.

Deprecating the bitterness of contemporary feeling, "Let us go back to causes before we judge effects," I said, "arrange our setting before we sit down to table. Unrest follows revolution as revolt oppression. Look at America after '81. America——"

"I have read that eyewash," he waved his hand. "Every once in about so often it bobs up."

I ignored the interruption.

"At the close of the War of Independence," I repeated, "America was overrun by adventurers. Patriotism went down before politics. The constituition was mocked. Stability gave place to insecurity. The country seemed upon the brink of catastrophe. Shipping rotted in its harbours. Trade was stagnant. Currency was worthless. Upon every side the passions of men like the blasts of the north wind had stripped their souls bare to indecency. A nation does not win liberty playing dominoes. Liberty is a woman. He who seeks to win her must use violence. Liberty beareth violence. The violent bear her away."

"Liberty!" he trumpeted. "The butler is a man of consequence in the servants' hall. In a conventicle of Daniel Webster's that bumstuff may carry weight. It does not pass the clerk of the scales in real life. I live in and have seen something of the world."

"You haven't by any chance done Russia on roller skates?" I ventured; but the essay failed.

" I allow exceptions," he continued—no doubt he meant himself—" but an Irishman is an edition of humanity in commoner binding, without illustrations, and no index. There will be nothing soon for anyone to bear away out of this bedlam except a pack of lunatics."

He may have been unfortunate in the day's selections. The Valdepenas may have been of too fruity a vintage; or it was perhaps just an uneasiness for the safety of the Twelve Pins themselves that was upon him. But whatever the explanation, I considered it unreasonable that my one evening in this place should be spoiled by a perfect stranger, even if, by the chance of tables, we had been enabled to pass a pleasant hour together over the fritillaries of dinner. His manners then were sparkling. Now they had fermented. He may have intended the remark about the butler harmlessly, but it was inexcusable. I kept cool, but I was very excited. Trying to interest him in the common furniture of the educated world I had discovered myself talking into a bottomless vat. That remark about the Irishman was clever; but the symmetrical outline of the fellow, which had at first appealed to me, crumbled when you leaned upon his mind. He had nimbleness, but so has a goat. All my sympathies are with Sir Peredur-of-the-Long-Spear and Katharine Tynan; but this horse-Caliban! he should be ridden off the island backwards.

" I must be popping," I said, getting my cigar into full draught and preparing to push off. " No two nations or men think alike. Some men drive nails in where others would pull them out. My property is in England. I have only a slight understanding of the politics of this island. But I have

seen method in the madness of some lunatics; when they slipped their strait-jackets around the hickers who had sandbagged them for generations."

I was gone before he could find his tongue. Looking back I admit it was debatable; but I had wound myself up until I became indifferent to what I said. Sometimes they seem the great moments, when you wake up and, sweeping pretence through the scuppers, for once let truth rip through gaping, incredulous ears. But always one comes back to Epictetus. Detach yourself: a gentleman endures and abstains.

There is one prospect of Tramore that may not be omitted. Upon a day of shadows, looking westward across its bay from the Castles of Brownstown, Ireland, the whole meanings of it, its thrill of life, its throb of agony, lies unrolled before you, gnarled in a thousand perceptions of the beautiful.

It was the afternoon of my day with Dagge, the day of my journey to the *head* of Brownstown, that parting from him he had given me the warning, without which I might have missed altogether the place he called Corbally. He had warned me, because, looking towards it from the road above, it seems no more than a stout wooding. I turned down the short road giving approach, and with some hesitation passed through the entrance gates. Giant macrocarpas "high and lifted up upon their branches," an immense coolness, enveloped me. I went forward as a man moves up the nave of a great cathedral. Then its miracle was wrought on me. I was deep in shade. Next step, the step dividing two worlds, seemingly casual, taken without premeditation, and—for the tide was in full flood—like the vision unrolled before the Captain of Exodus a

prospect stretched out before my two eyes—the inner and outer sea, the near hilltown, the tasselled glory of the distant mountains—the surprise and joy, the fellowship of which held me motionless on the broad terrace where I stood. What, I thought, when power to think at all returned, what must life be like, day in day out, lived in safety amidst such loveliness?

When at last I had drunk to my soul's capacity, I turned in the direction of the great stone house. It was an unusual structure. It fitted the surroundings, yet was puzzling. There was grace, but grace with biceps. It possessed some baffling quality. A man named Fortescue I was told had planned it. To this hour I am puzzled to tell to what harp he sung when its inspiration came to him. But this may be said, plantation and house together are unique: that is to say—for the word bears helping out—so happy is the disposition of their united art, so fortunate are they in natural setting, so mellowed in their tangled harmonies, a modern landscape-gardener might be driven to fling himself into the quicksands beyond Rhinéshark, in despair of ever reproducing between art and nature so abiding and perfect a bonne entente. Corballymore and its trees produce the strangest exhilaration. It is a thicket of shade, enfolding sunshine, that the bees love and the birds cherish. I poured benedictions upon Dagge. Here must be, I said, some haunt of old-world stateliness, where surely the root of happiness is watered as the Nile is said once to have watered the temple of the moon-goddess Astarte. And where the sod breaks off to the sand, near the low scrub, from the loggia at the end of the wood, there is a trick-prospect—in certain

times of the tides and declining altitudes of the sun —that converts the great burrow of Tramore into an atoll of the Pacific.

WHEN GREEKS JOYN'D GREEKS

With that restlessness for the next stage which has been noticed as the proper mentality in a traveller fully equipped for adventure, as I now was, dawn found me astir. My intention, journeying leisurely, was to make Bonmahon in time for lunch; for Ryland had created in my mind a Bonmahon numerous with delights. Some rain had fallen during the night. The morning was fresh and clear. I was leaving the Twelve Pins and his rustics behind. For hours yet the gross breakfast that he would eat would not see the fire. Everything conspired to put music into my feet. With each advancing step my spirits rose.

Engineers at some remote period had opened two main roads between Tramore and Annestown. Following the inner of these two I came, at a distance of some six miles, to the wooded glen which leads down to the defile of Dunhill. From Tramore to this point you pass through an open country, green meadows, white farmhouses, herds of grazing cattle. Then this descent, and you are in another world, houses, cattle, the smiling and pleasant countryside, vanished. From the glen-foot, a point of tactical importance, rises the ruined rock-fortress of Dunhill. Around is a scene of romantic beauty. From this point, which

is the neck of the bottle, the land opens almond-shaped to the sea.

Later in the day I asked a man if the place had any particular name.

"They call it the field of Peace," he said.

He seemed surprised that anyone should bother to enquire.

The Field of Peace! for a famous battleground it is a good name. In the mid-distance, on a patch of firm soil, there was an obelisk, the meaning of which is lost. I wondered in what forgotten cause had the unknown who sleep beneath so carried themselves as to win this sterile absolution. Standing on the bridge, my eyes on the river—lagging in its sloak-weed by the tomb with no name to the dead—my mind was crossed with dreams. Perhaps I would come here again and be untouched—for it is within the heart one feels much or little, and the heart is not always the same—but I do not think so. I do not think it possible to come, alone, to this place, removed from the familiar, and not gain escape a little while from the men who make mockery, not to be chastened from usual thought.

I had got out of the trap on the stone bridge. The sadness of dark water was about. A silence like the loneliness of death brooded over the place. And yet not always had it been so. I thought of the big men who had come and gone this way, with their teams in the rose of morning; of the little maid, Mistress Cassells, the Ann whose memory the hamlet preserves. It was beside the stone standing up there for its lost cause that she had bartered her heart, listening to the tale once too often told in her ear by that Chief Justice of Munster, whose "Sweet Redeemer" afterwards abandoned him at Tyburn.

From the rock above she had leaped to face the Master both of Mercy and Justice. But perhaps it was all a tale. I thought of those riders of the storm, the barons of Dunhill. By the road which hugs the western brae they had passed and repassed, clattering now with victory upon their plumes; now haggard, their horses white-flecked with the foam of flight, vengeance in their mail-clad breasts. The Field of Peace! it was a good name. Greed may have stalked this valley—for where doth Greed not hawk the sores of his leprosy—but imagination had not been impoverished. The sound of Orlando's horn had awakened this solitude. Romance had sojourned here. Death had enjoyed himself in this place. Yes; it was a good name. The low wash of the sea, the crumbling ruin nodding to finality, the spirituality of a land that resists . . . to possess what men call the shadow. A ghosts' encampment! It was a good name.

At the mouth of the ravine stands the hamlet, Annestown, a little auberge of a town rising above a strip of golden strand, its diminutiveness crowned by a tiny church. What was I to do? The crisp morning air had ridden rough-shod over my appetite. There was not the pretence of a place anywhere about that you could get even a hamburger sandwich. Then all at once, God overtaking my footsteps, I found myself at the door of a cottage guarded only by a Samaritan. She lived, it seemed, entirely alone there; but at the time of my passing a young person was staying with her. In remembrance of them I make this story.

There is a figure in American literature who holds her own against all comers. She is called Jane of Kentucky. The fragrance of all the women of the

Gospel is in every fold of her dress. Jane and this lady I have called a Samaritan are of the same tissue. The young person was also a woman. With a power of heavy reading the sight gets dim; but the richness of the coils of the hair, the brightness of the eyes, the sweetness of the amplitudes of the bodice—or whatever it may be called—there could be no doubt upon the mind that both were women. She was in fact, as it turned out, the niece of the house. Well, together they filled me with a breakfast—tea strong as a bridge, a sole out of the sea below, bacon cured-in-seance from the great cellars of Waterford, butter golden as fen-country wheat, griddle cakes—it was the breakfast of a very high nobleman; and it cost . . . but that would be giving away a delicious secret.

In foreign countries I am told how a charge is made to guests for what is styled *service*. Now I want to put the case frankly. If, after this mode, my bill had included a decimal for service by her whom no painter could paint, I ask you could it have been paid in the equivalent of trade? There is the teaching of à Kempis, you say, "Be not familiar with any woman, but recommend all good women to God." I will not dispute it with you. It is my own practice. But give à Kempis this picture of the maid from me. How shall I describe her that I may be full, yet not mar my purpose by long-windedness? She was all twinkling curves and harmonies. Her head was perched like the head of a bird is perched on his shoulders. Her eyes laughed, as if asking whether you believed what her lips said. Item: there was a rose behind her ear. Did I say ear? Well, perhaps it was; but if so it was an altogether special kind of ear. I do not profess to under-

stand the *ubi* and *quando* of these things; but the turn of it was of that contrivance, the angle of the adjustment of it was so, the convolutions of its component parts were such, that all the acoustic sweetness of the earth was gathered up and carried by it into the chambers of her brain. The Twelve Pins are in Mayo. Away with them! I blessed Ryland. He was a heretic, but I blessed him. But for him I might never have seen Annestown. Upon her . . . May all the twelve hundred blessings of Erin be on her! (Upon Jane also, of course.) And in the hasp of her heart a husband.

The coast west from Annestown is the wildest of the Côte Decies. All the morning—token that autumn was in the land—companies of starlings had been circling about my path. Now I was only outside Annestown again when here they were, wheeling, swallowing, deploying, in unending flight.

Where the road twists beyond the dangerous harbour of Dunabrattin I turned Dinoclus loose to pasture and descended the quay. Below, mending some fathoms of herring net, I found a fisherman. Dogfish had played harliquinade through it. Perhaps it accounted for the man's surliness. I wish to believe so. Grudgingly I extracted from him that the fishing along this part of the coast is poor and that in certain winds the sea is perilous. The Fishery Board, he told me, had destroyed the fishing.

"It wouldn't be ten days," he said, "when I counted fifty-three trawlers not three miles off that head."

His speech was bitter. The Board, it seemed, had thumbed and ruined his life. They were responsible also for the spinacid. But the country was gone to the devil anyhow. He had an edge on Protestants

for one reason, on Catholics for another; for he was the first of those I was to come across who divided the country up upon the elemental basis of religion. But Board or no Board the man at heart was a "*désobligeant.*"

Further conversation proving impracticable, I made my way back up and out on to the headland which gives shelter to the little bay. If Sir William Windsor—who made war longer in Ireland than any other English knight—really landed at this place, it is difficult to follow the reasoning which prompted his decision. The chance of loot from the neighbouring castle of Dunhill may have had to do with it: adverse winds seem a more probable explanation. What matter about him? Possibly you never heard of him. I could not prevent his landing here. I cannot regulate the winds. I was not responsible for the fifty-three trawlers. I did not invent religions. I would have eaten my share of the dogfish or helped to mend the man's nets if I knew how and circumstances permitted. I was for the moment upon this headland of the good Earth, the salt wind upon my face, the world beside was Vanity.

Unrolling my map I surveyed my route. Nothing remained now but the road between me and Bonmahon. I drew Ryland from my pocket. For the last time, before reaching the great watering-place, I decided to taste him. Much, says he, has been done to render Bonmahon a fashionable bathing place. A circular race-course, a convenient strand, public rooms . . . the gentle murmuring of the Mahon river through its woods. That was 1822. A century of years. I jumped to my feet. "A Deauville of the Côte Decies," I cried, "with the Towey of Llandovery meandering through it." Why had I

neglected to engage my room in advance? The Mahon was a trouting stream. The woods must have extended considerably: the department of Irish forests would have seen to that. I fixed the Casino—the public rooms of Ryland's time—in the heart of these woods. The Gaelic Revival would have added golf to the race-course.

Dispassionately I will set down the record of what follows. Hastening to where Dinoclus was browsing I took hold of him by the bridle, so as to turn his face around for Bonmahon; for he had gone down a piece of the road in the opposite direction. We do these things every day without a second thought; but had I seized the equestrian statue of King William in College Green, I might with greater facility have turned that nobleman around with his back to the Poddle River. For the first time since we joined company the brute's real nature broke up through him.

It was at this juncture that my attention was attracted by some five or six urchins—idle, scalded, bare-footed imps of rascaldom scenting trouble—who had taken up a position on the ditch not twenty yards from me. Conceiving at first it might be friendly advice they were shouting at me, I stopped to listen. But I am being constantly overtaken by such experiences. Up to my eyes in work one day (let the telling of the story be my remembrance of an old comrade) a brother " loot " looked in to see me. What aeons ago it seems even at this short distance. It was summer, and I was glad of the respite. Sitting on a table from which, through a glass partition, he could command a restful view of the activities going on down the exterior wing, he began to talk, babbling in his light way of twenty things. I

enjoyed the expansion of soul, that sense of fellowship, his company ever brought. Finally, as he rose to go, a very handsome girl moved across our line of vision, a file of papers in her hand. I drew his attention to her. He looked at me with regret. "Davidson, old thing," said he, "you *are* soft. What the devil do you think I've been doing in this old cowshed for the last half hour?" So always had it been. No comfort these puckauns of Satan were offering, but every one mouthing his *aboos,* waiving the colours of Dinoclus; a circumstance of which that wily one was quick to take advantage.

At first I refused to regard the resistance seriously. Then I passed through the successive stages of surprise, determination, exasperation, to blind fury. As the entertainment proceeded the hubbub became indescribable. Tugging now at his head, now belabouring his bulwarks, now standing on the deck of the vehicle while I lashed out upon his stern works, I lost reckoning of time. The last position nearly proved my undoing. Judging by insecurity from the direction of my blows, the wretch suddenly determined to back the whole contrivance into the gripe. It was a dastardly trick. Vaulting clear in the nick of time I barely saved myself. I was now thoroughly roused. Hastening around to his head and whisking the reins out of the fair leaders, I leaned on them, rasping the bit around like a circular saw, then wrenching it from side to side. It would have had more effect on an alligator. Asses have no mouths: only tunnels through which they corridor their food. Greek had joyn'd Greek.

I am trying to write soberly. Times come, as the dwarf said, when bats nest in your belly, when the stomach seems to fall down in one; times when our

thoughts, chastened by adversity, turn to piety and fellowship, when compromise takes on new meanings; when conciliation becomes the god of Rainy Fruitfulness. Perhaps I may be different from others. I am just expressing with difficulty my own feelings. I decided now to subject the whole position to review. I recalled a speech of one of our public men. Had I been tarring labour in the person of Dinoclus? By all means keep labour to its toil. It is the solid rock, the Ciment Fondu, upon which the whole edifice of economics rests. But neglect conciliation and trouble is brewing. Did not the beaver bite off his tail and so save his life? Were not the words of the snake as true to-day as when, turning upon the lion that had spurned him, they had first been uttered?

"There was still sun upon the wall," as Panza says. Abandoning now every appearance of hostility I took hold of the harness where it envelops the ears, inaugurating upon it a series of light movements, while throwing in make-weight in the shape of little blandishments. In one form or another I spent a quarter of an hour at this performance. The stuffed birds in the museum might moult before a budge could be extracted from that beast. It was a wretched business, as all deceit must be. I have spoken just now of compromise, but only to set down the passing emotions by which I was stirred. With a jerk I brought my humiliations to an end. The coster has well named the ass. Civility was wasted on him. His name should be removed from the register of the S.P.C.A. If he understands anything it is the remedy of the Twelve Pins. I question if the remedy is not of universal application. Did David baptise his soul in tears in the cave of Adullam? Suddenly,

purged of all feeling, I became filled with an insupportable aversion against this beast. I penetrated him with a glance the malignity of which might have warned an elephant. The example of Gamfield, the chimney sweep, rushed to my mind. There was a man who understood and knew asses, and how did he use them? With unimpassioned hostility. With deliberation I now proceeded to tie this offspring of the devil to a convenient post and, standing back, rained blows upon him methodically, without heat, until the sweat stood in beads upon my face. Then unfastening the reins I caught hold once more of the bridle and tugged. A rope hitched to a steam-roller and slung around his neck might have moved him: as it was he was cemented to the earth. He set his four feet against the rise of the road and defied me. Cheers punctuated every relaxation and renewal of my efforts. Other youths may understand better what to do towards making life unbearable, or do it more effectually, but I never met them. Different times my mind misgave me whether, dropping the contest, I should not make a spring for the fence and cleanse it. I have my own views—let me say it with capital letters—on birth-control. Some persons will tell you of the nearness of boys to God. They are much nearer to the Devil.

The exhausted and miserable condition to which the struggle at length reduced me may be judged when I say that, beyond mutual stubbornness, so completely did interest die out of the contest that the jetsam upon the ditch decamped and left us. Had I sufficient strength I would have lifted the whole twelve pounds worth and heaved it into the tide. I do not understand those people named Die-Hards. I understand when I am beaten. I was beaten now. I

was like a grassed trout. It may seem trivial in the telling, but some things are too deep for words. I saw all my plans—and I had gone to no small expense—topple to the ground. Crossing the road I sat down, and putting my head between my hands, abandoned myself to the most malevolent reflections. What the skin of the ass is made from I do not know; but happening to raise my eyes, there, a perch from me, strolling a pace, stopping, then moving on again, was that incomprehensible beast, browsing peacefully by the side of the road. I came to the point of weeping. Not naturally restless, what had possessed me to leave the quiet of my rooms? Was it necessary at bodily risk, at no inconsiderable cost, at the mercy of every circumlocution, every forgetful circumstance, of travel in a country—well, in this country—to journey over all those miles to see the same sea from a position less advantageous? When the tide runs full the sea sparkles in that troubling Bay near Dublin. What perverse enemy of man impels him to set forward on such inanities? Is it compulsory to go abroad in order to learn that nothing surrounds us but the everlasting processes of generation and decay? Was it . . . here my records become incoherent.

What length of time I sat there I do not remember; but I retain a consciousness of being aroused from my dangerous condition by soothing intermittent pulsations across my temples. The poets who make for us their beautiful pictures have not exaggerated the influences of external nature. I passed my hand across my forehead, drinking in the healing of the air. Gradually the turbulence of my mind became tranquilised. A new light seemed to break upon me. Up to this moment no thought save of my

own interests had found room in my brain. Might it not be that I, and I alone was to blame for the whole confusion? To himself the ass is the centre of things. Was Dinoclus to wait the moment of my pleasure, and just as he had struck perhaps into the first succulent vein of herbage, into the rolled oats of his depasturage, be whisked off without as much as "by your leave." Awkward, disagreeable merit would never carry anybody far. There may be, there are, such things as the stupidities of politeness; but manners are old as the dust of the Egyptians. Had I not been the aggressor, alone to blame?

The colour of the picture now changed. I recalled, so far as memory served me, how history and tradition united mankind to the ass. They were indissolubly linked. Was not man the last, the ass the first of created beings? Were not the years taken from him added to those of man? Had not some, like the ass of the great lady whom Solomon welcomed with bridal honours, been admitted to the dream-kingdom of man? Can more be said for man himself? From beyond memory the ill-conditioned had misused them; but how had the greatest treated them? Had not kings and prophets singled them out for distinction? Did not the imans of Shiraz ride upon asses, their white ribands girded with inscriptions of Allah? The prophet of Judah who came to rebuke Jeroboam rode upon an ass. When the Holy Family fled into Egypt they laid their burdens upon his willing back and together faced the hazards of that inclement journey. The mind is a notable magician. Under its enchantments my eyes now sought my little doppel-ganger—if man may aspire so to salute the gentlest of creation.

"Browse on," said I to him, "O scion of a royal

race ! with thy whispering ears and step soft as dew upon the branching fern, the Angel of Death hath not broader wings than thy unmeasurable serenity. Woman is honoured in being compared to thee. Like man thou bearest thy cross upon thy back. Like thy Divine Master, who chose thee to accompany him upon his journey through Jerusalem, thou dost unite in thy person to His sublime tolerance of man's indignities, a subtlety harmless as Odysseus, a purpose unruffled as Penelope. Browse ! smallest of equines, graceful in thy shaggy beauty as the hill-slopes of Ken Avrat, browse on that burned pasture ; to thy frugal palate even the nettle is unctuous : browse, while thy brother learns at thy feet the lessons of his impiety, thy very bray the tocsin of his windlowless ambitions. Oh ! well for thee that thy will is strong, compassing thee in triple brass against the hoof-marks of thy sable fortune. Never again will my right hand be raised in anger against thee ; for thy mind is free from guile as thy legs from warts. Like the white steed of the king's daughter thy feet should be shod in shoes of the pure yellow gold. Browse Dinoclus ! and when thy belly is full, conscious of the gulf between us I will take my proper place—behind thee—trusting in the forgetfulness of thy spirit to bear me flute-like onwards, step upon thy gliding even step, upon the circle of my inconsequence."

My soul became stilled. The aims of battle and the fruits of conquest are never the same. It was now well after noon. Sitting awhile longer, I allowed my thoughts to roam uncharted.

At length, recrossing the road, " Dinoclus," I said, pointing westward, " when we come into our standing, at Bonmahon yonder "—I opened my fist, permitting his dusky eye to dwell upon the red and

golden fruit of temptation. " An apple, Dinoclus," I said, " Bonmahon." And with that, entering the trap I closed the door softly. " An apple, Din," I repeated, and in a twinkling. . . . You may remember when the hoarse gentleman had safely deposited that incomparable old ruffian, Wegg—Silas Wegg—at Boffin's Bower, in that pleasant suburb of Maiden Lane, " Supper, Edward," he said to the donkey, waving his carrot; and on the instant, " he, the hind hoofs, truck and Edward, all seemed to fly into the air together in a kind of apotheosis." So in a twinkling, on the same moment that I repeated " apple, Dinoclus," and touched his taffrail; raising a following pillar of dust we disappeared, Dinoclus, cart, tackling, hurricane-lamp and all over the brow of the hill, and out of memory of Dunabrattin, its spinacid and désoblegeant.

UNDER A COPPER SUN

FOLLOWING the sea I had come out where the road, emerging from among the ruined buildings of "The Copper Mining Company of Ireland," overlooks the Mahon valley. Dinoclus stopped. It may have been his way of saying "look below." I looked, rubbed my eyes, and looked again. The place might have passed for a bivouac of the Senussi. Ruins, purgatorial sand, an idle roadway drifting about the hummocks of an idle shore, a cemetery, the cemetery of laughter. My whole faith in Ryland sank. The summer rains which had fallen in Tramore had been heavier here. The river was in spate. But not a bird flew to or fro. The ravine weltered; a glitter of desolation. A copper sun blazed upon the copper land.

I got out of the trap numbed.

Perhaps I had not recovered from the emotion by which I had been stirred at Dunabrattin. Perhaps it was the heat and the long fast, and the disappointment. Perhaps I was becoming unawares a case for an alienist; but suddenly, pressing one upon another, I saw approach a swaying multitude, to the number of many hundreds, their faces a span wide upon my eyes. They filled the lower hillslope on all sides of where I stood. Some were beating drums. Others gesticulating "The seals of virginity, the seals of virginity, look!" and they waved their long arms on

which hung garlands of strange flowers, pointing to the buildings of the Mining Company.

" Stand back," I called at the top of my voice, " stand back "; for the throng, without alarming, confounded me. " Why do you make this noise? What is the meaning of this demonstration? "

At this there was a great clamour, and one who appeared a leader motioned for silence.

" We come once in every hundred years," he answered me, " journeying over the cliff-sided mountains and the green hills, placing these blossoms where the defeated fields have returned."

I shook my head.

" The law! " The multitude renewed the beating of drums, swaying their small bodies. " The seals of virginity, the law," they chanted.

With uplifted hand the leader again stilled the tumult.

" We are——" he said.

. . . . . .

But why labour a phantasy? I have not a mission to tell men old in sin the futility of their crimes. Had the lesson of the long centuries not been deep enough, was the planet not wide enough, that this recreation of earth by man's brain must also be attempted against us; that bursting her stays this land also must be covered with the bull-to-cow connubrations (I borrow the word from Professor Geddes) of pale wagery. I fixed my gaze upon the shaft of this Mining Company. During an instant of clairvoyance, had a peep really been permitted me beyond the wall of night encompassing us? or were we also building churches only to fill them with hay?

Descending the rift, I crossed the wooden bridge which still carries the road over the river. At the

near side, half way up the hill, are the charred remains of the coastguard station. Why it was ever erected in this place only the Lords of the Admiralty could explain. To listen-in possibly. Beyond the bridge, crossing the depression of the valley, the road skirts the foreshore and then, turning inland, enters the Copper capital of the Kingdom of Ireland. It was empty as a skull. A few listless, ineffectual shops deepened the dejection. A sort of silence passed through my imagination. Laughter was distant from my lips now. Other agencies than the New Feudalism had been at work here. I thought of Froude, of how he cherished the very weeds that grew in his beloved country; of his nervous vigilance of her regality, her craftsmanship, her omniscience; thought how the great heart that beat within him was wrung when he penned the lines " In no country ought a government to exist for which respect is impossible, and English rule as it exists in (no; not Ireland, dear friends), Dominica, is a subject for comedy." But it had been no comedy in Bonmahon. Here, if laughter ever existed, it was dead.

But I must beat the trail on Ryland. He had led me here. Where was the Armorican beach of his disordered imagination? Where was that circular race-course? Where were the public rooms? Where Mirth and youthful Jollity? Where indeed! The man had never looked into the cauldron of Truth. I pulled up in the middle of the street to re-arrange my plans. Then the thing occurred, the unexpected, astounding, impossible thing. In the very instant of my irresolution, from round the corner of the Stradbally road, appeared the twin spirits of Laughter. There they came arm-in-arm down the street, their eyes beckoning like fingers, all slender lines and

youthful comeliness. The dullest of us has moments of inspiration. It was like an intuition of Higgs. In the instant I saw right through to the other end of the Rev. Hopkins. My questions were answered. I recanted everything I had said or thought about him. He was the best of fellows, as I knew in my heart he always had been. The explanation of what he wrote was clear of understanding as the fat delicious gooseberries of his flowing periods.

It was all on a plate before me. I held him now in the hollow of my hand. A devotee of Sterne, probably with a copy of Tristram Shandy at the moment in his pocket—for was Sterne not of the same diocese, born just across the brae, so to speak, from him—on a Sentimental Journey himself, coming down this very street or perhaps below on the convenient strand—more probable on the convenient strand—he glimpsed out of his all-discerning eye the same twin spirits of Laughter; as likely as not the identical grandmothers once-removed of this pair of laughing Hebes. You can see the whole thing enact itself before you as if you were sitting where the ruined coastguard station stands, looking down at it. There they were, gazing out with their luminous eyes at the golden sea, silent, stung with the *aestrus,* their knees hunched and tight-hugged by their arms. Do you think Hopkins, a chivalrous Irishman, had his eyes so intent on geological specimens that the fruitfulness of this land passed by him? If you do, either you are some kindly English gentleman travelling in this island with your head in the Renaissance, or you never made such a mistake in your life and know very little about this country. Catching his glimpse, down to the bathing place his reverence strolls, and down upon the golden sands in front of the golden

sea, he quietly flubdubbs himself. The idyll now takes off from the ground. These were courtly days in Ireland. Hopkins owed no allegiance to the Roman Curia. His compliments presented, he embarks his thoughts in a pinnace bearing favours, and gently launches them . . . but what is the use of putting a tooth on it? Let us be candid as Sterne himself was candid. What are hands for? What do you expect hands to do upon a golden day, upon an Armorican beach, if not to slip through the hot delicious tingling sands? Ryland was of an age when men did not regard the world through a horse collar. The Ireland of Ryland was a land of romantic staging against black and golden backgrounds. He was himself a man who thanked God for every mercy that came his way. Do you think if his hand closed in fraternal affection upon the straying hand of . . . IF? Of course it did. What other explanation is possible of what he wrote in his book? Bonmahon in 102, in 1822, in a thousand years to come, is the one Bonmahon. The English people made what many times might have proved an immeasurable blunder ever to attempt the colonisation of this country, at least to have attempted it on the premises laid down. In history the wavelets created by centres of disturbance do not always diminish as they recede. And what was the gain? There is Belfast. Belfast witnessed that gathering of the bards, that last tragic assembling of the remnant of the Minstrels of Ireland, enshrined by Mr. Shane Leslie in his Songs of Oriel. That assembling is to her credit; but Belfast is not a city of charge and blazoned story: it is a growth of hours beside this land of Heber. Yet, under the shadows of its historic Cave Hill it lies a fair, almost a noble city, tire-

less, busy; busy as . . . suppose we say the Rhondda Valley. Some day the Rhondda Valley will return to the fold, its coal burned out. But the Rhondda Valley is not Wales; though the Feudalism of Machinery has not altogether divorced it.

And what remains? An adventurer—yesterday a stranger, to-morrow a native—escapes into the sunlight: then a damn is constructed, a canal is dug, a line of rails is laid, the water is run off a bog, a post office is set up or wilts, a mining shaft is sunk and disappears, a bridge is built or dismantled, a church falls to pieces or changes hands, people and things get different names, but nothing real ever changes in Ireland except what out of the perfection of our manners we call our permanent politicians, and its climate. This island (beyond an island) resembles what the Americans call Mission-furniture. It is immovable. And if Undertakers (to revive a significant designation) would only turn their heads another way when its name is mentioned there would be a lot more cheerfulness. What this land wants is a century of earth-tillage . . . and rest—Rest from the fathers and mothers who bring up offspring, not that they may be cut and polished into jewels for the national treasury, but into beads for addition to the family rosary; that sad heirloom—when not a trust for country—of humbug, of monstrous complacency, of misdirected energy.

It would have been good to meet the sire of those girls, to shake his hand. It is a man's work to breed women like them.

A SON OF WATTIN

It was in the neighbourhood of Bonmahon that I met Power. I fear to make too many pictures lest the reality behind should be obscured, but with Power I do not think this danger is present.

Have you ever noticed as winter comes, how the sparrows hurl themselves through hedge and thicket? You wonder how they escape breaking their necks. Power had hurled himself into life and come out like that. At first the fortune of youth was with him. Afterwards—the explanation is simple enough—Providence had placed in his hand the flower of the Branch that was by his side. She must have been very beautiful, his wife; for as the saying goes she was still head of the Court. My recollection of her, in contrast maybe to her husband, is impersonal, a memory of winsomeness; the winsomeness that belongs to four score, to age that has ripened into entire beauty in the backwaters of the world. Providence had been tender with Power.

I had been directed to their cottage as a place where I would get a cup of tea with bread and butter, and pleasant service; and drawing down, after my meal was finished—the great Schweizerhof, the Beaurivage, the Grand Hotel Comeraghstatterhof, of my imagination had long since gone the way of Ryland—about a shelter where I might sleep until morning,

it ended in my being installed in one of the two rooms which made up the sleeping accommodation of the croft. It was no more than a pillbox of a room; but full of shining things, white linen, little sacred pictures, flowered fonts of holy water, old china dogs, and a window; a window so tiny that the eye of a needle might have winked at it as being of the same mystery. It was in this room that I recited (as I still believe) in my sleep, the whole of Sir Samuel Ferguson's ballad, the Welshmen of Tirawley.

It came about through Power. Power is the most persistent figure in my whole troop of remembrance. It is the manner of Hate. We who belong to this island dwell amidst the brain-sick evidences of hate. No tobacco and pipes, and white candles, wake Hate.

In his young days Power had seen something of the world. Now he practised upon some six or eight acres of land. A redleg or little farmer they are called here. He was of splendid physique. There was such a flood-time grandeur, such an unhewn bulk about him, he reminded me of pictures I had once seen of the Ming tombs. For some reason he took to me, doing me the honour of sitting up far into the night in my company. After the purchase of Dinoclus I had indulged myself in a further prodigality. Like Henry II, during my passage through Waterford I had purchased—but with more modesty—a share of that Sherry wine for which even in Plantagenet times this great city had been famous. With my host's permission I now uncorked a bottle. The wine roused him, mellowing us, loosening the wrack of our tongues.

Since I had wound my horn, setting out to make some gladness for myself, Power was the first, man or woman, I had met, for whom the American word

" forgettry " had no meaning. A man was the sum of his actions : a race was the quotient of its history. In politics a Republican—Brutus indeed was not a more uncompromising Republican—I found that Republicanism with him meant no more than the accident of colour to butter. He was a Republican, because in some way the idea had identified itself in his mind as representing a thing which those whom he hated most feared. I have puzzled to solve the secret of this cramping of his mind. There was history. Power's mind was in flower with history. Dr. Lightfoot of Durham defines history as a soothing cordial. The definition may be unusual—I do not mean by history those books, now vast cargoes of sodden facts, now hulks laden with the debris of a nation—but, soothing or cordial, history is a thing to love as the stone loves the ripple of the brook, an illuminant. Was it morbidity? I shook my head. There was nothing absent in Power. The pungent look in his eyes told you that here had been a man efficient in the accidents of the present, able to balance and judge calmly, a man who, save for its brutality—which roused him to ferocity—had an indulgent outlook on life. It was not morbidity. Nor did he confess to having suffered any personal wrong. What then was the source of this hatred, " which eats the heart and feeds upon the gall," by which his whole mentality was darkened?

We had been talking about the Mahon. I had told him how, on leaving Annestown, I fell in with two policemen, pleasant fellows enjoying the truce. (I speak of times remote as the Picts and Scots.)

" I was surprised to learn from them," I said, " there were no trout or salmon to speak of in the river."

He puckered his face until its wrinkles crossed and re-crossed.

" You would be from England, yourself," he said, " or America? "

" As a bird hasteth to the snare " I fell into the trap. There is a soothing cordial about being taken for a distinguished foreigner, travelling leisurely through a strange land, very difficult to resist when sprung in this way. I am aware now that, from the start, Power had set me down on the borders of that class of Irishman described by Mr. Gilbert Chesterton, as " exiles from Ireland living in Ireland." I might have known he would place me instantly; because whatever an Irishman (in Ireland) may use false colours for, they are no use to sail under. His colours are nailed to his mast at birth. But interrogating me, Power had counted on receiving some such answer as actually I gave him. He knew the story of that king of Connaught who was so constantly stretching out his hand to give away that his right arm grew longer than his left. The laws of hospitality were bred in his bones. He wanted without offending against them liberty to speak his mind.

" I have lived a good deal in Ireland," I said, avoiding a direct reply. " I am very fond of it and of the Irish."

" I am sure they are obliged to you," he said courteously; and then fixing my nationality unconcernedly, " There's no country," said he, " where we're prouder to see our good name flourish than America. She is a great land, great from ' God to the gutter,' as I once heard one of her watch-tower preachers say for her."

It was not too late still to clear up a questionable

performance, but before I could make up my mind he had resumed.

" There's fish and plenty in the Mahon," he said, " if you have the wrist and eye, and a silent foot. But what I'd like to know from you, Sir—you are a learned gentleman—does any man know of the real natures of fish ? "

I made some commonplace remarks about grilse and herring. He listened attentively.

" Salmon and herring, eels too," he said, " are quare ones. But I'm feared there's no proper fitness in us to take any great knowledge out of the waters. May not fish, like men, have two natures, as the Mahon they say one time had two names : one for the right bank of it going against the stream and one for the left bank coming down. I hear tell of men as know a power, but an otter knows more of fish than any man. He can wind 'em for miles along the water."

He sucked at his pipe silently a moment.

" No man can reason cases on fish," he said. " The flesh of seabirds is salt, but the flesh of fish is fresh. Can you tell me why ? A fish is holy, or what is the sense of eating him on a Friday ? But there is nothing more murderous on land than some fish. A fish hasn't ears, but does that argue he can't hear ? A kingfisher lives on fish, but his feather makes a fly you won't match in a day's walk. A sturgeon swims with wind and tide ; but do his scales lie to his tail. The bass and mullet, are they friends or enemies ; or like humans, only neighbours ? Is the fall of the oyster just a frightful accident ? What is instinct anyway, fish or men, but the experience that comes down in the blood."

" Yes," I said, " that is true. The life remembers though the child be ignorant."

He nodded his head. " I would notch the stick higher up. But we can learn an odd thing by fish, when we have the gumption to use our eyes. The sperm does not hunt where the black whale lives; though his belly be bigger. But mostly their natures —and stream or sea, deep or shoal, I have lived amongst them since I was so high—mostly the natures of them are like the elements they inhabit, only the great God knows their secrets."

It was a strange speech. Bolt upright in his wooden armchair, he stared across, taking the full of his eyes out of me.

" But there is one thing we do know about them," he said, with an abruptness that sent a sudden tense stiffening through my body, " it wasn't a peeler that the Lord told to let down his net for the draught. And I'll tell you another thing about fish, about their natures, about police. If a peeler was to bathe his pelt in the Mahon river, let alone cast his line into it, there isn't a fish in its stream—barrin' perhaps a pike —that the scales on him wouldn't harden with sudden age, that wouldn't swim for his dear life beyond the Head of Helvic."

There was not a wrinkle of amusement on his face. So far there was nothing in his voice but cold contempt; but I was to feel the heat of the fires which scorched his brain. Now, when the great leaguer was being raised, when currents of generous feeling were commencing to flow and re-flow between those whom only the devil ever designed for enemies, this man's hate of the non-Gael and all he stood for in his mind, and all that belonged and appertained to him, only burned with a more lambent flame. Men scramble

for stall room in the theatres of their frequentation seeking to slake their thirst of life, to feed on its similacrum. Here was the real, not the Ruratanian thing; the naked flame, not its incandescence. Here was no mouthing of patriotism, but a volcano in eruption, the emerald sides of the lovely, soft manners of his race streaming with the lava of the hidden furnace that had roared inside for a score of generations. Steady in his judgments Power could use symbolism. It is not that he put to his thought a cap, he put a tassel to the whirling crown of it. I had read a remarkable writing some days before in one of the great London papers. The editor could handle ink. He knew it; for he allowed his name to go at the head of the writing he had made. It was a powerful piece. He carried holly and heaped it upon the altar of what Matthew Arnold called the nature-magic of the Gael. I had read him six months before when his massive hand held thunderbolts above that same people. He might have been sitting on the throne of Eblis. Now he had thrown the helve after the hatchet. He rolled back the unknown and peering down the centuries, invited us to see the vexilla of the united races commingling, as the Empire silver-bearded marched into the vista of futurity. It read almost as if he believed what he had written. Perhaps he did. There is no beauty comparable to that sweetness which is awakened by the melody of words. Men become ravished by its music. But whether he believed what he wrote or not, he had my whole heart with him. The writing now returned to me as I looked across at Power, wondering how many powers there might be in Ireland, how many Powers there were of all nationalities scattered across the seven seas. Then stirred by some broomstick perversion in it all, for the pass-

ing of a second I could have shrieked my heart out in hysteric laughter, wild with its pain.

Power talked with the charm of men who speak from first-hand recollection and was disposed to talk. He took down and showed me half a dozen books thumbed and russet-leaved: an old life of Tone, the poems of Mangan, the Journal of Mitchel, an Imitation of Christ. "I know most of them by heart," he said simply.

At last it was time to make a movement for bed. As he rose he took my hand, holding it a long time. Then standing back from me, "Life is like them new fangled tossers they have now-a-days," he said. "It stubs and ploughs and harrows the field of a man's cussedness; but the nature remains. There was a time when I prayed that the hand on me might wither if ever it touched the flesh of the foreign strain; but life makes men tolerant. I've seen through you, Sir, from almost the first. You are not an enemy. It is not your fault if your blood is tainted. There may be stones in my brogues, but I have travelled my share of the world. I soldiered with the north till arms ground. I was with that great nobleman, Sheridan, at Cedar Creek."

He took a glittering medal from a small box on the chimney board, and giving it a wipe with the sleeve of his coat, "They gave me this," he said, handing it to me, "though I never did much to earn it."

Upon an impulse I asked him about a thing which had been puzzling me all the night. Resembling a sporan, mounted on a piece of freshly stained wood, it hung from a nail over the centre of the fireplace.

"If I had the means," he said, "it would hang from diamonds."

It appeared that a little while before he had sold a

young mare, a long tail, for his widowed daughter-in-law, who lived somewhere back from him towards the mountains. The woman had been loth to make the sacrifice, but her son, his grandson, a boy of twenty, had died; and the poor have to do these things.

" The lad never gave himself a chance," he said, " but he was only lent us by the Lord. From a gorsoon the decline clogged him."

Despite its passion, the heart in this man was purified and made tender by its sympathies.

It seemed that the bargain made, the dealer had snipped the mare's tail before Power could stay his hand. This is the story as he told it.

Day following day, rain-soaked, his pillow the saddle, the night his blanket, gripped by the disorder tugging at his life, this boy had borne the despatches of the rebel army, his army, trusting his safety to his noble horse. Twice he had been searched, his saddle ripped for incriminating papers. " Had they discovered them, it was the deep-six he would get." Power hung his lip. " Then one morning he came home, blood on his mouth. His hour was come. He lingered a couple of months after we put him to bed there, in that room. He would let no hands touch him but these hands."

" And they never got any papers? " I asked him.

" As the fish hides in the shadow of the rock," he stretched his bony finger to the sporan above us, " them writings was hid . . . in that tail."

Told by Power it had the quality . . . but I must abbreviate.

" Yes," he said, " I have seen my share of the world, but what it is in me to say to you this night is that between where you stand and the Comeraghs,

I've seen all the depths and shoals of it a man wants. And what does it come to? It comes to this. When St. Paul told us that being bought with a price we were not bondslaves, he was inspired; and when he talked about a man receiving his reward according to his own labour, the inspiration was cold in him, leastways in the Ireland I knew. The future may differ. Time is the good story-teller. It won't concern me. But does that matter? I salute and pass on."

His face darkened.

"There was only the priest and the shoemaker present," he said. "Excuse my common way: only the priest and shoemaker; yet the awl was gone. Nations or men can set their price, and if they keep it set folks, sooner or later, will reach it. Perhaps it's the moaning of the sea that is in our ears; but the memory of sacrifice, Sir, is like the hem of the Saviour's garment. It keeps the heart of nation and man pure. Myself there isn't much to brag. '67 was bad. The fuse of the rising was damp. My pike never crossed the lintel of that door. No!" His eyes were tempest riven. "But the most blessed hours I've lived were the nights I sharpened it before that hearth. The young salmon of the flood may see keener. I am too old to change. I have beheld too much. With my young eyes I have seen the things that proud gentleman Mitchel tells on. I have seen a people flee like autumn drift from their own land, that the shelter of the friendly foreigner might cover them. I saw the famine rise, and while it bleached the land was the country blossomless? Answer me that. Don't think I put the shoe on the wrong foot. I know better. I have been receiving the flicker of the whip-hand too long. It is said there were mistakes." He laughed a gnomic, chilling laugh.

Then pitching his head forward, " Mistakes," he hissed. " In silence the liar can never take rest. . ."

It serves no purpose to repeat his concluding words. I was tremendously upset.

I do not know what opportunities you may have had of studying the habits of owls, whether you are familiar with the tenseness—that interval of indeterminate fear—so swift the silence—which follows the recurring deliria of noise in an owl-haunted forest; but as Power ceased speaking, as the sound of his voice stilled, I stood peering into such a haunted void the now motionless figure in front of me looming up through its horror; stood without the physical power to stir hand or foot. I remember a character in West Indian history, Daaga, leader of serfs. Fortune had placed him in the straitest predicament he would ever again experience. The sentence of his death had been read. They would cover his face. The negro in those days was still a full-blooded African. With eyes that blazed he flung aside the mockery. " I die uncovered "—he drew the words like a flaming sword from the thigh—" I die uncovered that you may see, and seeing be damned, the hatred of a race overcome by force, that by guile will live to tear you limb from limb."

To save my very life I could not have broken the spell that held between us.

At last, slowly drawing the great trunk of him up until he towered aloft like the mast of a ship, his mind whirling in a world I had no conception of, he stood glowering down over me. He had all but laid down the flowers of the crown of life. Not more than a year or two, five perhaps, a decade at most, he must as he said " salute and pass on." The sack would be drunk, the quarrel ended, the humbug of the Nativity

over—for what else have men made of that stable in Bethlehem. Yet, on the brink of this unmindfulness, he stood waving intransigeance to his people: an apotheosis of unconquerable, puissant, worthless hate; the hate and spear-crowned Vengeance, the sadness of Tirawley!

THE PLACE OF THE BEREFT CAREENAGE

" On the seacoast," says Ryland, " at a distance of six miles from Kilmacthomas, is the village of Stradbally. . . . The lower orders (having food and employment) are of a peaceful and industrious character "—and further on, dwelling at more length on the language and position generally of those orders, he adds, " The Irish peasant labours under all the disadvantages of a foreigner." I give the quotation as a piece of natural statistics.

Leaving Stradbally we now entered upon a hilly litoral, a place of ambushes and straggling intensive activities during the guerilla fighting of a few years ago. A new spirit had entered into Dinoclus. He stepped out as if there were bagpipes inside of him. The wind astern of us the miles flew until, coming out at length on the roof of a tented land, there, away in the distance, Dungarvan lay a smudge of grey upon the horizon.

The Earl of Cork called one of his sons Dungarvan; but except for its harbour, the town differs only from a score of others in Ireland in the difference of its name: all are graveyards of inspiration, places of faded or feeble enterprise, blinking at the sun, where the unreal assumes all the outward appearances of reality. But the harbour of this town is untarnishable.

I speak of the great outer anchorage. The inner harbour, or careenage—at one time, before the abolition of the nymph-bank fisheries, a home of ships—is a place where a broken rivet could not be replaced. "Like a Dungarvan merchant, all papers and no business" may be unjust to a genial, if easily aroused, community; but it has passed into the book of our proverbs.

The town is the point of departure for the Gaelic College of Ring. It is a busy administrative centre, and the clearing-house between eastern and western Decies. It is also the birthplace of Ryland. It witnessed the death of Cromwell's chief-of-staff. In more recent times its Court Baron beheld the physical castigation, then in his stuff gown, of the Supreme Tosspot—but why trade the scandal of the coffee house? Deaf is the ear and weak the tongue that listeneth and taketh pleasure in the revilings of the neighbour. To complete the sum of its general interest the town has associations (remote perhaps) with the Rev. William Scoresby. To me, however, it was none of these things. It was something tee-totally different. It was the land behind the Shining Wheel, across the Bridge of Leaps, from where my chase of the Reynard, Adventure, had started. I will give to the story a touch as little personal as possible, so that any illusion it possess may not like the fairy cows vanish at approach.

Once, in a golden hour, the bobstay of my vessel —she was mine in the sense I was afloat on her— had turned the point around Ballingoul, and entering between the headlands of the great harbour, dropped anchor seawards of the Ballinacourty light. We had come in to refresh and look around. Like Dinoclus every man is to himself the focus of the universe.

Upon the deck of that vessel, in this harbour which is untarnishable, I bowed my first acquaintance to the dappled youth, Life, whom I have since loved as a brother; loved despite his mercilessness, because the heart must love something; because in the final analysis, apart from the last desperate wager of faith, Life is all we are certain of.

The meeting was this way.

Near by, but closer inshore from us, a German barque had cast anchor. The Norsemen we are told used to hang their shields around the gunwale of their vikings. It was a good plan. It gave galliardise to the dull days. In similar way rumour had hung the lamps of mystery around the gunwale of this German. Some I still believe were not whippoor-will; and the immediate trouble was very sober fact. Her Captain, roused by an inopportune dago who had not skipped fast enough to obey his orders, had in a moment of impatience ripped him up badly. It was imprudent of course, and as a consequence he found his ship laid under some sort of legal interdict, and himself in the strong prison of Dungarvan. For the moment Ireland was sleeping. Except the prison-governor and warders the captain was without company. Visiting the place next day our party was conducted by a route that enabled us in passing to obtain a good look at him. I recall him perfectly. Save ear-rings there was nothing wanting to him; for, though his mouth was stained by what I now know was only tobacco juice, from eyes to sea-boots he looked murderous. He fulfilled all my expectations. If there were flaws and cracks in him they were not visible to me. I was fearfully upset about him. Sisyphus-like the authorities had imposed on him the task of whitewashing the prison. I had not

then any acquaintance with Sisyphus; but that the monotony and degradation of such a task should be imposed on a descendant of Tarpaulin Johnson, of Avery, of Kidd, of all the illustrious whose faces shone for me as if they were lighted up inside, it sent me into an acute despondency. As we left the prison, escaping from our main body, I purchased and concealed about my person, four Sexton-Blakes of the period. On getting back to our boat we boarded the German. Then I read Blake assiduously. Finally, the moment for action arrived, gathering around me my trusty comrades, I hoisted the anchor of imagination and having scuttled the crew, ran my colours to the main top of that curly barque. It was a glorious game. During the years that followed—up in fact to the time of my falling in with the Rev. Scoresby—I sailed that German down the Gulf Stream of the Picaresque, gliding her smooth and rudder-free into every high palmed creek from Cayona to Campeachy. " I had just to shut my eyes to go sailing far away " trading my ventures of necessity, but with the disdain of a Brasiliano—my senses intoxicated with beauty, betimes fleshing my good Andrea Ferrera in the accursed Europeans, who in turn had keel-hauled the gentle Caribs of those clove-scented coral-bespangled shores. Ah, wallah, the imperishable years! before manhood has fallen upon and assassinated us, have we not all been through them, those Anno Domini when our chase of the Reynard was new; in which we held the torches of our imagination on high so that they might flame and smoke and cast strange lights around the romantic figures of our protagonists? the only heroes whose existence ever justified an hour of sleeplessness in our beds.

Then one day, to the interest of these emprises was

added another sweetness, making it more difficult for Scoresby. But why labour the point? Does the Adversary not lie in wait everywhere? In what country does Paphos not hold assize? Is it not well known that the glances of the senoritas of those far-off lands can ripen even the pimento-berries on their trees? It may be that I was only contemplating how delicious must be the taste of such fruit; but Scoresby would give countenance to no dalliance with the devil; and so, gradually, looking into myself, I determined to abandon the life I was leading.

Thus, from the moment Ryland fell into my hands I was drawn, as the maid draws who hath the wisdom to conceal her heart. Memories had been evoked. The north became raw to me as Belfast whiskey. I must come here, to this harbour of untarnishableness, that I might, as Higgs had said, bathe my feet in the morning dew, might taste the "finish" of sin again. Afterwards I could return to Scoresby.

"Who is Scoresby?" you may be inclined to ask. He is not anybody at the moment; but once upon a time besides being historian of the Greenland whaler, he was a Doctor of Divinity, a Fellow of many gracious gallimawfrys, and the gentleman whose name will be found written across the hull of the *Mary Russell,* Captain Stewart, of Cove in the County of Cork, Master, when the Judgment opens; that story which stands out alone from the death-roll of the sea as the doctor stands forth the strangest of evangelists in the bead-roll of the Church.

What cantrip, what eddy in the current of life landed Scoresby into the Church? He was fortified in the Lord, yet far removed as the devil and a Presbyterian kirk from, say, the Curé of Ards, or the Curé

of Arran for that matter, Father Frank O'Flaherty, with his views that the priest, the servant of God, should seek nothing from the things of earth beyond the necessities of subsistence. He was at heart just a deep-sea rover. Telescope under arm, from the frontispiece of his book, the *Mary Russell*, he looks out at us with a roll, the aureole of the quarter-deck. Fortunately they never succeeded in translating him, for had emergency caught him among these Greenland whales, he was just the man to have used a crozier in a way that, as a religious people, we prefer not to think about. That is Scoresby, outward bound from birth; splicing the main-brace with the same hilarity he no doubt spliced the maidens of his flock, when the hawks came their way. He has crossed the bar. May the divine gods grant he is now before the Almighty Masthead, for none ever proceeded him better entitled to safe anchorage. He enjoyed life to the brim; but as Captain Stewart once swiftered the sides of the *Mary Russell*—the operation of undergirding described in the account of Paul's tempestuous voyage to Rome—so the Doctor took care to swifter with the hawser of salvation the sides of his own spiritual craft.

"Let us be ever on our guard," is his watchword, "keeping not an ignus fatuus of Satan but the beacon-light of God's providence before us."

There is in this town of Dungarvan a tavern of some pretension, an old-fashioned, pleasant, wide-spaced hostelry. Its fulfilment may not quite equal its promise, but it serves, and it bears contrast. It bears contrast, because "there is nothing which has yet been contrived to match" some of the inns in this island. A blight, except in their reckoning,

seems to have struck them. They must have owners; but one is perpetually puzzled to decide whether they may be only visiting here from their estates in Picardy—or more sunny Languedoc—or whether it is fair to blame them at all; whether in truth, like the clachan of Aberfoyle, between sodjers, saxons, caterans, and reevers of one denomination or another, an honest man might not easier make a living in Hell than on the Irish line.

Here and there, before the Hohenzollern war a stray German threw himself into the business. There was one such in Leitrim. Instantly his hostel became not an ignus fatuus of Satan, but a beacon-light of Providence. Cramped foreheads maintain there is "a rot among the bishops." Others cast joyous horoscopes. The Press, always judicious, hands out a word of praise and blame. Everybody must decide for himself whom to believe. The fact remains, that there are still inns on the Irish line which are unprintable. "Their inveiglements, my lords, are subterfuges too gross upon a state." Some doze through the winter; only as the swallows return, to sound the hallali for scenes of unmannered revelry unreproducible in Europe. Perhaps my experiences as a passing guest were unfortunate. Perhaps my comment on the tragedy of a Nation's Dance to Death is unjustified. I have not any particular sympathy with the Reverend Stiggins, or his Society for providing the world with Moral Pocket-handkerchiefs. Perhaps comment is itself the deeper folly. Comment did not arrest Titania's love for ass-headed Bottom. Let us leave this Dance of Death to the devil. It is the business of his Ministry. Some then seem just to hibernate through the winter, while others maintain an Ordinary the year around; and

between the one and the other little is left to choose except necessity. Their wines were never meant to travel. Their service is a fugue. Their bedrooms are freezing-chambers. Esquimaux sit in the glass-cases of their offices. No one cares a stick of celery whether you go or stay. Their coffee rooms . . . what is the sense of a coffee room in a land of tea drinkers? It is a pig-tail in Europe. Their commercial rooms . . . now if I have to pack up all my belongings and remove to a safe place, yet for once I will speak out my mind. I referred to ownership. If there be any ownership in these latter caravanseries outside of musty title deeds, from door-mat to vent pipes, it is vested in the cordeliers whom Mrs. Todgers called commercial-gentlemen. Mrs. Todgers knew these gentlemen. "It's nothing to say a joint won't yield, my loves,"—she was addressing the Misses Pecksniff—"a whole animal wouldn't yield the amount of gravy that commercial gentlemen expect." They have drained Ireland of every drop of it. We are a strange people. "Be our brother," we shout one to another, "or we will kill you." We fight for a hundred test calls; while a race of *mel corbeaux* strip the land naked as a crowd of locusts, belching even their coffins ready-made (in nests) upon a long-enduring, gesture-ridden people. Did I say strip? have stripped it until every nailer, weaver, whitesmith, cooper, basketmaker, tanner, every long-headed, cross-grained, wax-ended stitchman and cobbler of our own flesh and blood, every honoured and thriving occupation and simple charm of a once happy countryside, has been blotted off the land, their backs broken by a smooth tongued . . . but you know the type. It was not always true to say that a man who has never been to Ireland

has a poor conception of what idleness is. What is the MacSwiney doing? Is Sylvia Pankhurst asleep on the deep? Her range is cosmopolitan. She levels the guns of her *Dreadnought* against bourgeoise, against princes, ay! emperors. To what purpose is such waste! while this drummer, the hodman of the whole diablerie, survives. In Ireland at least—I say it impressionistically—may he, and with him all the tightrope walkers—the people who have crossed the shadowy social frontier between wholesale and retail, who make the paradox possible—may they all slide together down the buttered slope into . . . where they belong. A Drummer! a man with a ready reckoner for a rosary in a land fluted with romance. The very thought of him is—phylloxera!

THE FLAMENS OF ARDMORE

LONG-DESIRED, it was quite suddenly at last that Ardmore, white with waves, the summer's end, came into view. Deserting the main road I had hugged the uncertain coast for mile after mile. The day glowed blue as a sapphire. A fire seemed to be burning in the heads of the little birds. Somewhere, far away, were the arsenals of civilisation, its climbers, its confounding phenomena. To-day for me, in this land of the hosting of the Nan Desi, there were kings in Tara.

When the gale rises to the south-west there must be mighty seas on this coast, for even in high summer the Atlantic booms here with the sound behind it of a hundred centuries. Again and again I halted that the actuality of the great ocean might take possession of me, only to be caught up once more by some fresh, unclaimed wilderment of the alternating littoral. So the glorious day wore on until, threading the last stretches, I advanced more slowly, preparing to enter. Then getting out of the trap, letting my foot fall lightly, we came in.

By the convention of scholars, only in *arido modo pumices expolitus* may one write of Ardmore. "Good," I said, "but as I am without the Pale I will not be bound by penurious convention. I refuse allegiance to its laws. Neither internally nor ex-

ternally will I be associated with it. I will not recognise its king. I will not take off my hat in its Court. It is an age," said I, "of excavations. Have not even modest women excavated and laid bare their limbs? I will dig up the flamens of Jupiter, Mars, and the god Quirinus. They will be the healthier and better even on their own account for a little refreshment." It was one of those fancies which is not the less importunate because fantastical.

The flamens of Ardmore are Declan, my lord Boyle, and its Mistress of Posts and Telegraphs. You knit your brows. Give me permission then and I will explain.

Entering this blossom village you would find its nerve centre? Enquire for the Post Office. The key to this enchanted land is kept there. You may not quite recently have been reading "Our Mutual Friend." It has been my privilege. What Miss Abbey Potterson was to the Six-Jolly-Fellowship-Porters in that great story this pleasant lady is to Ardmore. She is the flamen of the god Quirinus. Romulus did not rule in Rome with more absolute dominion.

You would discover next the iconoclast responsible for the monstrosities that buttress the venerable ruin on the great height? I will introduce him more fully later. His name is Mars, Earl of Cork. This Earl of Cork whom one cleric calls "the great industrial revivalist" (ominous name! if it be true that where gold is the swill, men become swine), is more astoundingly enormous than anything in the Ramayana. He built, says Ryland (and building was merely one of his minor activities), thirteen castles, four incorporate market towns, and as many stately bridges. A species of embryonic monster, to deal abundantly

with him, with his progression, progeny, financial operations, tombstones, salt-houses, hatcheries, iron-smelting, bridges, castles, regiments of foot and horse, and what he called his Work-of-Works, to see them all in the light and the half light, would require the intellect of a Rabelais.

To Declan I allot a separate chapter.

Ardmore is a place of immense antiquity.

Towards the extreme north-east corner of Scotland lies a city called Dornoch. If you are a golfer it will be known to you. It claims to be the most diminutive cathedral city on earth, and of an antiquity more remote than MacPherson's troupe of heroes. It is the way of these Scots. I have a right to speak freely about my relations. Loaded up with their Widows and Caledonian Festivals they go tramping over the high roads of every respectable country on the earth, leaving the owners to take the low or any road they please. Dornoch may be the most diminutive city in Scotland. The spire of its cathedral may be handsome as King Charles declared Miss Stewart's legs. The antiquity of the city may be venerable as the little settlement leading down to church and bay is beguiling, but I hate boastfulness. We will leave the argument there. The cradle of Christianity—in Ireland—rested in Ardmore, the most diminutive cathedral city on earth, on this spot, on the hill in the near distance, the Hill of Sanctuary.

Standing on this hill in so far as you believe in the meanings behind the resistance of this land, your reverence is excited; for your foot is on one of the most sacred spots in Erin. Above you is the reed of Declan, that belted pinnacle pointing skywards. The missions of the dignity of existence, of the Church of the Gael, are portly in the hips: they rest in the

shade of the most distant lands. Great houses they are, angels carved high up upon their angles, which souls inhabit. In the blood of the builders were lightnings. One of the switch boards of these lightnings, perhaps the greatest, stood here.

But of Ardmore, the cathedral city and capital of the warlike Nan Desi, almost less than nothing remains. What little we know of it—a frieze-fragment, the drum of a column, a shattered limb or head—comes to us through the Bollandists. The Bollandists may not have believed in the emphasis of under statement, but they collected and collated valuable material. Were it not for the *Acta Sanctorum* one might be pardoned the doubt that this populous seat of learning ever existed, for even a travelling man has to-day not a tale to tell of it. Where its opulence was, the hamlet now is; a village street and the villas of a few post-Jacobean settlers. The reed of Declan survives, but it no longer guards any treasures save memories. Upon the heights, out to the Ram Head, stood the great sacerdotal seminary, "filled like the hive of the provident bee with the sweet honey of learning." The hive now is silent. It was torn up from the ground altogether. Only the hamlet—that minute layer of colourless cells upon the past—the confronting destiny of this land and the sea, the flaming dreams of the Gael, remain.

Those dreams, dreams, dreams of the Gael. Why must they always torment me? Are they tushery, or only the effect of external nature upon a form of that illusory idealism which so exasperates Mr. Stephen McKenna? "The Irish," says Mr. McKenna, "believe an ideal is worthless if a man will not die for it. The English will do anything for an ideal

except sacrifice themselves for it." To some it may seem the difference between Pontius Pilate and Christ.

The history of Ardmore is not much to set against cities like Damascus or Alexandria. The Nan Desi ruled here. Declan lighted the flambeau of the Gospel upon its height. For centuries it was a centre of learning and delicate craft. The remnant of the Desmonds is buried in its neighbourhood. During the years men have marched out of its solitude into fire, without order or pay, hymns their battle song. Once 117 gibbets stood a jibbering spectacle around its sanctuary. Always its people have obeyed the call of the sea. Memories! Ardmore does not drink its port as wine should be drunk: a trial of the bouquet, a sip, a deeper yet still meditative one—profaning no divine order. It does not put the hedonist into agreeable mood with life. It pays no quit rent to fame. There is no drugget now of crimson cloth across the Drum mountains. . . . But its interest will never be tribal.

DECLAN

THE tapering pinnacle of the tower of Declan! If only someone would give me the rod Caduceus that I might raise to life the dead, not be raking with a poker among their ashes.

Looking at the big world from under the grey skies of Ireland, does it not seem sometimes like looking down the line of some stately battle fleet . . . through the wrong end of a telescope? You see great capitals, like Mildendo, feverish with activities, inconsequent to you as the ant-city under the upturned rock; you feel, in our curious way, how out of wave length with modernity is a civilisation which, if it have any meaning, is "to clear shadows from the sphere of Truth." Ireland may be only a handful of a nation through any end of a telescope, yet there is height to its cheer; and sometimes, though we do scar, hate, abhor, loathe each other, we catch glimpses of the Spirit within . . . life-giving as the sun; white as the snow, subtler than the ether. Nor are we the only people to hunger after the flesh-pots; or despise the traitor and profit by the treason. The arguments tumble on one another in their haste to convince reason. So inevitably I come around explaining satisfactorily, at least to myself, why it is that I make porcelain in Ireland . . . or is my

workshop only a *faiencerie?* That I may not answer. In literature as in ceramics the instructed workman must pursue his art, leaving the greater issue to the virtuoso. But I will admit you to a secret. It is true that I work in the white clay of my country; but in design I am ever wavering between the baroque and rococo; and I have not mastered the secret of firing. The figures get out of drawing. But while I work the days slide one into the other; and if in return men are good enough to let me live, what more can a man desire. The dream is my own. The sorcery that one day, perhaps in a year, perhaps ten, I will evolve a piece, queerly attractive, an interpretation, which may come to be valued by the people in that land I have loved for itself; loved too, like the sea, for its uncertainty. The big world is so far away. What would my pieces be doing there? They might be broken to fragments, and they would lose the underglaze they owe to the grey skies.

It is not easy to pourtray Declan so that the picture may be adequate, yet preserve true perspective; for this teller of high things is perhaps valour for valour the Chief Senior of Ireland. In this supremacy lies the risk, the danger of offending against the canons of reticence. A nation emerging from the condition of suggestion to one of action is prone to over-drape its horoscope in orphrey work.

Declan was no cleric with a bell and pulpit. He did not labour that this island, like the rum of the black island of Jamaica, should be known as the place the stout comes from. But I travel too swiftly.

Before the column may be erected in the market place must not the ground be cleared, the foundations laid? Let us then examine, in the first place, what connection exists between Declan and the pinnacle of

Ardmore, the round tower which bears his name; afterwards expanding the message associated with that connection.

Scientifically these pillar towers of Ireland may be written out, but approached through tradition it is not quite the same; rather science has talked tradition out. Archæology has bitten deeply into these monuments with their singular prerogative, alone outside the climate of Egypt to resist unaided the disintegrations of time. There may be many papers (I do not know) recounting the services to knowledge of archæology not written by antiquaries; for working blindly, like the coral insects, the accumulated labour of antiquaries is prodigious, while some of the labourers have been men of genius. In Ireland one name, that of Petrie, stands out in the just place accorded to it by the judgment of scholars. Others indeed there may be more erudite in epigraphy, in this or that specialised branch, but Petrie, the "master of those who know," with his passion for detail, his gift of imagination, his genius to organise enthusiasm, is almost a heroic figure. Above these pillared towers he is the unerring star. If an individual archæologist ever settled anything with sureness—that was uncertain—he laid to rest the embittered contentions which for so long had battled and fought against each other around the origin and uses of these strange structures. His book is like first and second rain. We leave it down compelled to agree that these towers are ecclesiastical. And yet in one respect it fails. It leaves us groping for the switch, in a hall of a thousand chandeliers. The little statue of the Proserpine! we rejoice to have seen it. But what was the name of the artist who poured the charm of Sicilian meadows into the dead stone? Man, the child of

curiosity, seeks after knowledge (apart from tangible results) from the resurrection of his reason to the tomb. The older he gets the bigger child he becomes. And what are nations but groups of big children. So, as a nation ages, its eyes turn ever more continuously towards the past. It takes science into its service. And science, omnipotent with omnipotence, having started the whole of us down the great road leading to the Beginning, too often leaves us to go forward as best we can, the stout cudgel of tradition our only reliance.

"Way for us," demand the historians, the antiquaries, the learned ologists of every ilk, "way for us, we are on the business of Science, the stone-eyed One." And Tradition, the mark of years of studied repression over him, ashamed for himself, stands aside. Long ago, upon some impulse of generosity it is said, they admitted him to degrees, "But no scholarships, Tradition," they warned him, "it could not be done."

And picking up his hat, Tradition thanked their honours and departed. But the mind in him was like the escarpment of the Comeraghs: and sometimes, even to this hour, when with his own, he breathes into their ears the things they know to be true. Why not? Is not the blood the same? Science speaks to the head. Tradition talks to the heart in the silence of the body; and he would be a cleverer philosopher than the general run who could convince us, the common people, who is the bigger fool, the man who listens to the voice of the heart speaking to the head, or he who follows the head, his soul manacled upon a Dead Sea bottom. But these sort of speculations we must leave to those whom they interest.

What then has tradition to tell, without prosing,

about this pinnacle in which, during a moment of leisure, we are interested? All he ever has to tell, a whisper. But superimpose this whisper upon the learning of Petrie, and, like the colour flowers of photography, lo! the name of the maker of that "statue of the Proserpine" forms itself. These towers are of the soil whoever built them. They range themselves alongside all that we imagine the distinctive civilisation of this land stands for. They originated with somebody. There is no reason why Declan should not have been that one. No case, upon the Christian assumption, is capable of being made that can disprove it. The accidentals support it. That mysterious thing, the voice of the people, affirms it. Weak, you say? It rests on stronger premises than the atomic theory of the universe, if that theory still survive. Its infirmity, if infirmity there be, is that of Petrie himself. Let us see in what this infirmity consists.

To Petrie, musician, artist, informing spirit of that school of Gælic research which blazed with such brilliance in the mid-nineteenth century, exaltation! No literary crinkum-crankums are needed to enhance his reputation. He raised of its kind a temple proud as that of Seti at Abydos. Argument is piled upon argument, proof upon proof. In his opening chapters he marshals and disposes of the rival theories of his opponents: that the towers were of Danish origin, sun temples, phallic emblems. Then upon the ruins of General Valency, O'Brien and the others, he erects the imposing edifice of his own case. From the uncompromising scientific viewpoint it carries conviction: if a seam shows in the masonry the fault is not with the workman. Assume then, as scholars agree, his case to be proved, is it not reasonable to

suppose that the great ecclesiastics who reared these structures did so in pursuance of a settled national policy of church building. Even a cursory study of the history of church art and architecture in England, or abroad, establishes this reasonableness. Ecclesiastics have been always enthusiastic builders. Their labours in that direction are like "the cedar trees beside the waters." Even the druids wrought upon majestic lines. In the round towers the Irish ecclesiastic hit upon an epic design, distinguished as distinct, uniting with its excess of strength over mechanical requirements that seeming lightness which perpetually stimulates the mind. From everything that we know of the builders they were simple men, emotional as simple. Essentially therefore they were vain, with that sort of vanity which is the most innocent and delightful of the passions. When men are possessed by such passion they are consumed by it. The devil is cancelled in their souls. So, their minds preoccupied with the excellence of their achievement, we find a pillar tower putting the keystone to the arch in almost every seat of remote learning and holiness. How comes it then that these steeples are nowhere to be found in Europe? Churchmen are conservative: Irish churchmen not least so. During five hundred years Irish ecclesiastics, carrying with them the fruits of scholarship, penetrated the most distant parts of the Continent, winning millions to their Master by the doctrine of human love. They went to the ends of Europe. St. Cathaldus (of Decies) reached the home of Horace: he could not have got much further unless he crossed to Africa. They must have been heart-full of the slender columns, graceful as young palm trees, that their genius at home had evolved: yet with Ireland

they left their towers behind them. There is explanation for it, sufficient arguments of justification, but the circumstance raises a momentary doubt. It may be only a mouse of a doubt—one wishes Dr. Petrie had killed that mouse—but were the reed with which we are concerned never raised by Declan, its adoption and user by him consecrates it. Our already awakened interest in this sun-swept village, which bears the burdens of the honours it is heir to so modestly, is quickened.

In the village street one or two taverns, an unsightly ruin, the fraying of continuity, disfigure it. But if there is no circular race-course in Ardmore, Declan surrounds it; for if little be known of his life, that little like the epistle of St. Jude is "full of strong waters and heavenly grace."

Sprung from a princely house, of the race of Eochaid the Ready, Declan was born at a period in Ireland, towards the end of the fourth century, when her national life had attained a degree of endowment only exceeded during the great ecclesiastical cycle that ends with the Danish invasions. He was a favoured child. "Grace and surpassing charity," as the old chroniclers word it, "manifested themselves in his countenance," drawing all hearts to him. And as his years ripen to manhood, and the story of the man-God fills his mind—touch flax with flame—the brooding energy of the young patrician bursts into fire. The designs of God in him are fulfilled. And the meagre pages tell how in the years that followed he interlaced learning with learning, gaining in his sojournings abroad that knowledge of men and manners which were to embellish his actions and distinguished rank; until, flashing upon the land which encompassed with her skies his heart, with Patrick

he crowned her with an intellectual victory quite unlike any other in history.

Sitting in one's armchair, reading of those remote days, it is easy to miss the spirit of the time. Youth was not then trained to pursue knowledge as a means to success in business, so that from that proud vantage ground it might be able to close its hand upon the concupiscence its eyes desired. In the pagan Ireland of Declan's boyhood druid and chieftain had their mensal lands set apart; but the people drew strength and roughness—for nature is sometimes mother, sometimes stepmother—from the soil which was their inheritance, in sight of the commune, for the joy of life. They quarrelled as men must quarrel, but in brave strife equal with equal in opportunity, conscious in all things of the unseen behind the seen. And around this civilisation, chivalrous to woman, fair in battle, sweet-voiced in story-telling, the mountains of No-Temptation looking down over it, stood the airbe, the magic fence of the druids, sealing their power, encircling the attachment to them of their people, which is a star dancing at the birth of this nation. The Irish druids were essentially a national institution. There was national pride in their steadfastness, in their native arts, in their erudition; national delight in their necromancy, in their drinks of forgetfulness, in the heated mysticism of their ritual; a national pride and delight that was a bond of steel between priests and people, yet a bond which the light fancy of the latter refined to gossamer.

Such then was the society upon which, with the gelt of a crusader, Declan burst like a flood of waters. The druids did not melt from this country as snow upon a summer mountain. Nothing of the kind. Men do not do these things. They do not yield

power upon the asking. Nor had the druids studied divination without discrimination. They were not unprepared. The hour had been anticipated. In maceration and hot damnifications they had made ready themselves for the day " when bare-poll would come over the wide sea." Before this patriot-saint, soldier and scholar retired into himself, devoting his days to vigil and austerity, only the keen brain, the balanced judgment, his gift of alertness in emergency, a will spangled with enthusiasms, could have swept the forces arrayed against him like a prostrating scourge, could have crowned the activities of his manhood with the success that awaited them. Declan is to this land " the point of the lance of battle, the wind which breathes upon the sea." The human spirit is a thing mysteriously put together. Declan's name does not occur among the twelve apostles of Ireland : for that matter neither does Patrick's. Yet his name stands apart in the Great Relation.

It is a summer road to-day, that road through the conquest of the druids ; but my word to you it was an Argonautic expedition to the great captains engaged on it. How did Declan find himself ? The archdruid of Decies was a man feared, as venerated, throughout the wide territory over which his power extended. His power was backed by the weight and authority of the King Lebanus. He was a man to whom the learning of his caste was an open book. He had read the signs. *Sic cadere necesse sit, occurrendum discrimini:* " If we must fall, let us go out and meet the danger." He knew that unless this renegade to his king, this apostate of his faith, this fledgling of the Nazarine, were crushed, the teetotum of his order was spun, the seed withered in the fruitful acorn. Holding the king's mind within his grasp he matured

his plans. Playing upon every passion of his people he saw not a thread amiss in their tapestry. Then waiting the moment, swift as the salmon to elude, deadly as the snake to strike, he threw down the gage . . . and in the issue, so adroitly did Declan advance and retire, so skilfully did he organise and wage the unequal contest, he not alone routed the druids setting the red tongue of the flame to their eager woods, but—with the sovereign power of the Nan Desi people behind him—he stood the recalcitrant monarch with his back to the burned forests and dethroning him, declared Fearghal, of the royal race, their accepted ruler. It was victory through the length of time. And in the consolidation of that victory we learn how he poured the dignity of the gospel out over the broad land, sending the fame of his achievements in front of *him* who was to light a coal of faith in this western island "which was never quenched and never shall be quenched." He bore the cross like a smoke-edged flame through the ranks of the druids. They vanished. Off they went.

Doubtless it is best to be born in one's own time; yet it must have been good to wear a five-fold toga in the days of those Nan Desi. Life was lived then close to nature. But if I had worn a beard in those times I may as well admit I would have had no claim to "the king's shoulder." Still, a place anywhere, would have been regal privilege at that banqueting table, when Aengus, the king, flushed with excitement over the new strong God, caused welcome to be made for Patrick and Declan, and the holy Bishop of Emly.

Upon the swelling bosom of its "rock of hundreds" under its high-pitched roofs, Cashel to-day is a memory of priesthood. (In 1101 Murkertagh

O'Brien dedicated the whole curtilage to the church.) In the days of Aengus, aloft above its spreading woods where all eyes upturned might see it, it was a place of kings, LACREE, the fort of heroes. Perhaps some day, under the painter's brush, the pomp and clashing brass on brass of our island history will take form again. No poem, no discourse, no pen, has power to lift the soul so completely. In one flash of the eye you are transported into another world. You breathe the spirit of the illustrious dead, the noblest living. You become a partaker in the beauty of life above self which the gift of the painter enables him to reproduce, to suggest. You are conscious of stirrings, the intensity of which you are without power to communicate. And you go your way, struggling to recall what deeds you also have put by, cleansed if only for the moment of all littleness. Do I but increase the wind with my sighs, for the day when every hamlet in this land will own at least one replica worthy of the great Originals—when the originals come our way?

If only my itinerary could catch the measure of romance, could break up that solitude of the fort of kings, filling it with the laughter of armies, peopling it with the throngs assembled to do service to this princely gathering; could relay that board, setting it to "circumstance of chivalry." Alas! that commensal scene lies beneath me with something only of the blurred distinctness which belongs to those first moments between sleep and waking. The day at last is closed. The camp-fires of people and soldiers glint through the bosquets of the wide plain, a valiant sight! At intervals beacons have been lighted to dispel obscurity, for the night was dark. The sounds of music, of ordered revelry, steal softly to the ear.

Above, upon its "fairy ridge," the lodestar of all eyes, the palace of the king blazes in light. The banquet is over. The royal marchpanes have in turn been removed. Minstrels and trumpeters have withdrawn, but the walls still glister with shields. The guests are still seated around the tables. The moment of unloosening of tongues had come.

The times are unusual. The Peace of Rome was losing significance. Already her cohorts had been recalled from the neighbouring island of the Britons, a day's sail with favouring wind. Having repaired the great wall of Severus and exhorted them to arm in their own defence, Rome had left the islanders to their fate. Then Dathi. No doubt Dathi had returned with impressive spoils. His soldiers had strange tales to tell. But he could not be trusted. At best he was a flibbertigibbet. The king, renowned in the celebrity of arms, is eager of the latest instructions of this usurping Power. The resources of Patrick are taxed to satisfy his thirst of the sources of strength, the nurslings that had gone to the endurance of this empire, now sorely menaced. The new God of course could not be gainsaid, but he came through Rome. Under the scrupulous courtesy of the king there is a sudden searching note. But Patrick had been more than a match for the Ard-Ri himself. He has no need of strigil for his brain . . . until it comes to the horses. The lances of these Romans! Rome might be all the prelate claimed for her: her kings had embraced the faith, that was a point in their favour; but could Rome put spur to heel in fleetness, or weight-of-stroke, with the cavalry Cashel could put into the field? Patrick has to mind his step now. Declan, more used to courts, more critical in knowledge, comes to his aid.

The king wants to hear also, calm and easy, the news from Dun Rury, and the palace of Ailech. He is attached by many endearing ties to that fair fortress upon the shores of Swilly. There was rivalry too in those days, going to the core of life, for pre-eminence in hospitality, in lordly herds, in the sweetness of bardic song, in feats of strength and arms, between north and south. The Chief Tanist is silent and watchful. He has little love for this suckling faith or its expounders; but his reserve is borne down. And as the high discourse sways there is anecdote and joust of wits, until their minds bending to make head against the purpose of their historic gathering, their voices fall to deliberate debate—the reservations to be allotted the druids; the pecuniary settlements of the Church; its place within the polity of State; the standing of the ollaves; the weighty adjustments in the civil law made necessary by the new dispensation.

Our difficulty in recapturing from the mists of the past the real Declans, the men, without nimbi or aureoles—clothed just as they were in the disadvantages of the flesh—is part of the price paid for the soul of this nation; but it were a yielding to secular prejudice to lay the whole blame upon the broad shoulders upon which so much has been already piled. The old monastic writers have much to answer for. The compilers of devotional books are not without blame. The badinage of the mystery-play introduced its own element of distortion, and what these influences left untouched painters and the makers of the impossibilities in stained glass took in hand. Amongst painters there are notable exceptions, El Greco, de Vinci, Rubens, Rembrandt, though the latter is not free from error in the opposite direction.

Associated in his work with the House of Orange, he had the virtues and weaknesses of that house. He was a No-incher. But judged even from the patriotic standpoint his apostles, with their twelve honest Dutch faces upon them, were a mistake . . . numerically.*

It has been my good fortune to taste "the good corn" in that excellent tale, "The Doom Window," to enjoy the art of Maurice Drake, but he has not converted me to belief in some makers of stained glass. Fortunately there is one thing that neither hagiography nor these grotesqueries have been able to destroy, the knowledge that comes down to us of their victims in stone. Stone endures. It is the mystery of Egypt, the wonder of Rome, the politesse of France, the regality of England. It is a promontory of sun in a bay of shadows. Declan and his contemporaries may have been insular. On the ground he was not of Gaelic birth Ibar stubbornly refused to recognise Patrick as his metropolitan. At the Council of Whitby, Colman of Lindisfarne, while acknowledging the authority of the Pope on matters of doctrine, put the independent claims of the Irish Church—its hereditary succession to benefices, its tonsure, its talismanic ritual—with unyielding frankness.

But the insularity of these sons-of-learning—an insularity distinguished in their churches—if combative was exquisitely sensitive. It had in it a soldier's strength; but it had also the affection of the bibliophile for his library. Because his bibliotheca holds many treasures he is not the less aware of its inconsiderableness; but that inconsiderableness only forges the bonds of his affection more firmly, only

* This spirit—differenced—is characteristic of Celtic art.

deepens his tenderness for each Aldine and Elzevir within it. One must not be too ready to accept some facts of history; but without tossing of spears scholarship has restored much of the lost Ireland; of those days when art was the solace of the poor, as well as the luxury of the rich; when " patrons of learning from every darkened land found shelter and inexhaustible sources of information " within these shores. To the pure and white retreat those imperious intellectuals designed their country should become—and which they made of it—they deemed restraint, the stern beauty of their architectural art, better adapted than fanes modelled on temples of Ceres and Minerva. Declan brought back Christianity from Rome : he left Corinthian and Ionic columns where he found them.

And from the same source we obtain another glimpse into the minds of the real Declans, into their romantic attachment to beauty, into one of the sources of that " miraculous freedom " with which the Irish led the way in the poetry of pure nature. (The commas make watertight the judgment of one of the most fastidious of English critics.) No experience from the past strikes quite the same note. The cathedral of a mediæval city sealed its dignity, symbolised the union of its crafts, expressed the glory of each citizen in a city of his own creation. So in this land. The mere catalogue—Ardmore, Glendalough, Derg—of these early ecclesiastical foundations, for all to whom the names are not mere words, reveals not merely the austere copiousness of these geometric builders, but the profound devotion of a whole people —whose church was centre and periphery of their thoughts—to the ideals their sensitiveness to exquisite forms of earth represents. " Their seed standeth fast, and their children for their sakes." " To be

carnally minded," says St. Paul, " is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." This nation must take its lift of the work of life; but in loyalty to its ego—the individuality of its tradition—its buried talent recovered, quickening its material labours, it must live—or wilt to a footy province; to a half-peasant, half-huckstering puppet state, to two-penny magnificence, to a *department de brocanteurs* . . . must perish. For thus endeth the Dream.

From a frustra of columns the informed architect can fix the period and purpose of the building they form a part. Some day, from the incunabula that survive to us, a Winklemann, some Cuvier of archæology, will throw apart the iron-studded leaves of the portal of this gracious past. But even in its existing condition it arrests the mind. It carpets with kingcups the arid highway of hagiography. It helps to explain the historical fact of the fame of these men abroad, their abiding influence at home—then—to-day. He that hath the steerage of my course, direct my sail. These Declans laid with their own hands the flagstones of the hearths of the people, raising upon them a superstructure of virginity, of the conception of labour with dignity, of the spiritual symbolism of beauty, without which the trappings of nationhood are empty as the conclusions of biology, its trumpets sounding brass, its Christianity a midden of flies.

The splendour of Rome was at Declan's feet. The culture which appraiseth the grape that the frost hath touched was his birthright. Courtier and scholar, Rome, its religious flair, its imperial vision, its intellectual abundance, its tree-bordered ceremonial, called to him. " Let us praise famous men and the fathers that begat us." Declan was of the blood. Faith

covers him with the toga of miracles. Awe moves around his stately steps. Yet it is in the mingling of the wisdom of the seer with that "simplicity of the dove" of which the learned Bollandist speaks, the union in this mitred saint of the crusader's zeal with the love of the Samaritan, the lofty impersonal dedication of his gift of life to brotherhood, that surrounds with the true aureole this first swallow of the Gospel in Ireland.

The yoke of Christian restraint rested easily upon Declan. Was he not of the root of those whose girdle was Truth; whose vows, even in war, inhibited deceit; whose chivalry was fairy-led? Declan lived the Gospel; lived it as a prince of Faith, with all the symmetrical elegance and simplicity of the Evangelists. Pliny might have conversed with him as with his friend Romanus; yet Lazarus would not have envied him his couch, the Baptist might have shared his table and been at home. The grandeur of him is like the grandeur of snow upon Errigal. His impulse subdues. In mental vision we see him still, beneath his reed, Doctor of the Tuath and the Trinity, standing with his staff with wings, arm upraised, bidding his people be of good affection, "the benison of erudition and science and every blessing from Jerusalem to Inis Gluair upon them." We kiss the dust of his footsteps. To-day upon the white altars of a thousand hills the sacrificial fires—his effacement of self in country—are kindling. If there be drifting smoke, what of it? If the wood be green the wind is strong. A little while and the smoke will have rolled away. The rains have been heavy on the timber the long years. A canker ate into the wood. If the canker is deep the woodman's axe is keen. Before Olivet came Golgotha. Look around. God's

covenant with this land is written upon her mountains. Patience, and the timber of these fires will leap to tongues of flame, the flame lift itself along the belt of the zodiac.

"Alert on the walls," Declan, prince-ecclesiastic—still priest, withal ecclesiastic—captures the imagination. Christ behind him. Christ before him. Christ under him. Christ over him. Christ to the right of him. Christ to the left of him. Here, where the sea breaks, a clypsedra of eternity, upon its unfrequented shore; where from the height of years he looked down upon the recession of that life laden with service; in this village of miraculous waters, obscure as Nazareth, which his name has made a shining stone, where his light—now occulted, now reappearing—burns steadfast and undimmed, what invocation rises to the lips? *Hinc lumen et pocula sacra.* May that light shine, those sacred waters ever abound, in Erin!

Let us return and sustain folly.

I was now approaching the Blackwater, the western frontier of my journey. What was I to do? "All my life long," says Mitchel, "I have delighted in rivers, rivulets, rills, fierce torrents tearing their rocky beds, gliding dimpled brooks kissing a daisied marge." This tumultuary flood, the Avon Dubh or dark water, was regarded as the show river of Ireland. A journey through Decies omitting it would be like the Indian idol of Mr. Egan that had lost the diamond from its forehead. Yet the eastern, or Declan's road, along which my route had been marked, ran wide of the river. I was in what, by indulgence, might be called a dilemma.

Now, while the horns of this dilemma were pushing me hard, there came back into my memory a gentleman, Tombleson by name, and his views on what it pleases me to call the German Blackwater. "Tombleson," said I, "offers a way out. He is an alternative. I will study the river through the eyes of the guide-book makers. The guide-book makers will bring me into the valley of that delicious Ireland where it is always glad, confident morning, and as to seeing with my own eyes this humming river itself, selecting one or two points more folded than others in enchantment, why I can steer Dinoclus for these, and like Ryland imagine the rest."

The name of Tombleson is not in any way famous: none the less he possessed talents of a valuable kind. He was what is known as a religious humorist; that is to say one who, while appearing to be burned up with hot fiery conjunctions, is in reality a personage of beaming spectacles. They are unfortunately rare. Zealots for the most part are sophisticated and correspondingly depressing. I do not include professional zealots. Zeal is their business. A man must not be judged by the things his business obliges him to do.

Tombleson however could be severe when aroused.

"It was rank blasphemy"—Tombleson speaking.

"What did you reply?"

"Reply! I replied nothing. There was a drop of twelve feet from the window. The hotel management charged £6 for the broken glass."

Opening at Cologne, Tombleson finds it unhappily circumstanced. This famous city has considerably improved in late years; but in the first half of the last century it appears to have been in a sad way. Its valour was gone. Resting upon his staff, the distinguished visitor looks into the situation. A country wrought out of the soul of the blue-eyed Teuton, of boundless wealth, of soaring eagles, Tombleson meditates upon the conditions that could have made the opulence of the once resplendent city enduring. Then he hands round for examination the seeds of its decay.

"So, despite all its natural advantages," he sums up, "Cologne sank under the weight of the Roman church."

The callus had hardened on its heel.

You observe the absence of sophistication, the naturalness of the conclusion. Some writers, having laid down these premises, would lead their followers

into a metaphysical labyrinth and leave them there. Tombleson's gifts save him. A dull man, having conducted to the crest of a high mountain the members of—say the Licensed Vintners Association—would not point to the universe around and then sit down, expecting them to sing the chorus of Creation. Tombleson, Master of Humour, understands its conventions, the distances that separate it from wit; for wit though it enter pleasantly, in the end brings only remorse. Are we ever sufficiently sensitive to these distances? Wit sets the invisible within the visible with jester's bells before the mind: humour disentangles their elements exhibiting them mysteriously to the heart. Humour hides its art: wit is elevated by it. Humour is poignant: wit is pestilent. Humour admonishes, it is a Searcher of thoughts; but it is watchful over itself, just, compassionate. Humour is never over-healthy, never forward, never exultant. It never strives after ineffaceable strokes of the tongue. It never travels beyond human weakness. Humour does not depend for its prosperity upon the ears of the world. Fire tests iron, and humour tests the discipline and lovableness of a man's mind. Humour is not the vogue, but it is always wise. It is like lunch at the George in Southwark: it is full of noble and generous things. No man is without fault; no man but hath his burden; no man is sufficient of himself; no man is wise enough of himself; but humour will ease his heart, will help him to lift it above littleness, to live so that he may suffer men. Humour is devoted to beauty. It opens many locks. Religious humour opens every lock. "Religion," says one of the mystics, "feeds upon opposites." Fat men eat lean meat. Tombleson, a religious humorist and good

Protestant, (for God's mercies are infinite), sees right down into the cavity of Cologne, puts his finger upon the tooth and the nerve shrieks. Tombleson, a good Catholic, visiting Berlin, (with the deposit of faith secure in solid bullion in his soul) peers into the crystal of that wicked city. "The unfortunate people," he says, "lost their religion in the time of Luther."

"Cheylard," says Louis Stevenson, "scrapes together halfpence for the darkened souls in Edinburgh; while Balquhidder and Dunrossness bemoan the ignorance of Rome."

I found many excellences in this pleasantly descriptive book, but none to excel its religious *frisson*. Would I miss this excellence in the guide-book makers for Ireland? "Courage," my heart said to me, "you should know your country. Is it not a house without a staircase? The anthem may be in minor key, but it will be there."

I fell upon MacPherson. Let us call him MacPherson: his handbook of Ireland. Youghal, my destination, stands in much the same relation to the Blackwater as Cologne upon the Rhine. "The churches of Youghal," says MacPherson, "are the Church of Ireland, Methodist, Independent, and Roman Catholic." Evidently at the period of the particular edition before me Presbyterians had not discovered it. As Scotsmen are mostly Presbyterians this was unexpected. However the pleasant Kilmarnock bonnet had got as far as Waterford; because enumerating the churches of Waterford, MacPherson sets out the order of their denomination as follows: Church of Ireland, Presbyterians, Methodists, Independents, Friends, and Roman Catholics.

Not being in this genial disquisitor's confidence I

cannot say why Presbyterians occur before Methodists; but it is clear wherever they come from that the MacPhersons are not from Wales. I make no complaint however. On the contrary, as the clearest print of endeared remembrance upon my heart—of all those that manhood tried, or childhood loved, or boyish intellect approved—is of one who was born into that severe faith, I take off my hat to his discriminating intelligence . . . if he were serious.

That is the difficulty. How does MacPherson arrive at his classification if his object were not honourable entertainment?

I would have liked to consult some learned ecclesiastic, but was dissuaded by a fugleman in such matters. "You will be dropping your letters into a pillar-box without bottom," he said with acerbity. I am convinced now that he was embittered by some passing grievance; but at the time the fellow influenced me. I decided to examine the facts for myself, laying them like parallel formations of gneiss along each hypothesis in turn. There was the law of Order. Dukes' eldest sons take precedence of earls. Younger sons of dukes rank as viscounts. Bishops step in a pace before barons. Very good. But an Ecclesiastical College of Arms would be a desperate experiment. It was necessary to proceed by rule of thumb. . . . Ecclesiastical history itself disposed of antiquity. If it were possible to ante-date Christianity you would find all our religions fishing in the pools about that time for their nativity. By the nature of the case the question of antiquity was excluded. Accident it could not be. Repetition rather suggested contrivance. The census raised a barrier against numbers. Numbers are obstinate

things, even under the lens of Deuteronomy. I paused. . . . Could MacPherson have taken it upon himself to introduce an arrangement based on sanctity?

It was a stupendous thought. With trepidation I entered upon the consideration of this hypothesis. I went back first, naturally, to Presbyterians. Assuming MacPherson to be a Presbyterian, the position among Nonconformists accorded to that body then became intelligible. But why stop there? The Church of Ireland, a Nestor among churches, was not MacPherson's. Even the Chinese, accounted among the most polite of nations, in matters of this kind pay homage only to their own ancestors. Still there was a possibility of delicatesse: but if delicatesse were present to MacPherson's mind why should he have placed Quakers second-last in the odour of sanctity? If there be any people on this earth, except Presbyterians, of whom it may be said "the heavens shall be their bed," their name is Quaker. "A Quaker of the olden time, how calm and firm and true." It was puzzling. There was the explanation, of course, that the position allotted this people was intended to accord with their natural modesty. But if the idea of modesty was present to MacPherson's mind, why invariably had he settled Catholics comfortably last? There is nothing modest about the pretensions of the Catholic Church. You are either in it or the holy oils laid on your lips would smoke. It is a dogmatic church; a church that has no doubts upon its mind about undenominational education. The question became increasingly difficult. True, someone must be last: there were William Morris objections to an alphabetical arrangement: he drops Catholics in last. In any case at the time he

wrote his book it made no difference, as Leon Gambetta said, where you put them.

There might conceivably be another explanation altogether. "Saints that are highest in the sight of God are the least in their own eyes." (Lest this book should reach Auld Reekie I mention it in a whisper.) In parts of the Scottish highlands the old Catholic faith had withstood all assaults. Might MacPherson himself have been a Catholic? Well, it may be for his soul's profit this distinguished man was a Catholic; but on reflection there was one insurmountable obstacle to accepting that consoling explanation. He speaks of Catholics as Roman Catholics. Now I want to be quite candid. The Venetians, whenever they wished very much to talk about a thing passed a law, imposing a fine on the person mentioning the inhibited subject. It was a foolish business, depriving themselves of the company of Laughter, always just around the corner shaking his sides, waiting for the next man's turn to come and take his stand upon his dignity and family connections; and we knowing where his dignity and possessions came from. A nation should keep the heart gay. A gentleman may be poor and yet march very well on the road to love. It was clear that MacPherson, whatever he might be, was not a Catholic. You do not find Buddhists describing themselves as Japanese Buddhists, Hindu Buddhists. The thing is not done among the great religions. I came back to where I started. Was not the whole full-lipped truth this? MacPherson, a student of Ireland (where the last note spiritually and otherwise that can be wrung out of religion has been registered), a man full of delightful expedients, probably himself from Glasgow, a presdigitator of

jest, sets the balls of his drollery whirling above our heads.

"I am sorry about the Quakers," he says, "but the lion-strength of the religions of this strange people —man could not support such holiness. Religion is a good thing. It teaches the keeping of the Sabbath, and whatever else one honestly can lay hands upon. It disciplines the mind. It throws a transparent veil over our blemishes. It helps a doubtful novel. It is the servant of respectability. Religion is good. But this people overdo it. I will jumble them," says he, "into a delicious pepper-pot. They will have their own terragona leaves to spice it. We cannot express the things we feel because we do not understand them; but they might blow up with a fearful roar. It would be the best ending."

But even in Ireland we escape sometimes from the heat and burden of our minds; and if perchance at intervals I do load up my pages with spirituality I have a word "to say for myself." Eyes bloodshot, hands bleeding, the man behind the gun, fighting his way through to the soul of a nation, must not complain because he is grimed and almost choked with the spent gases of spirituality. So the indulgent reader. If the roar of the discharge at times presses on the inside of the head and on the eardrums, causing confusion and numbing of the senses, he will not complain. Are we not working together towards principles; those principles which were the strength of Leonidas, the lustre of Turenne, the glory of Bolivar?

Late starting, the sun had westered low when, my arm aching, I came out at last on the point of Monatrea, upon the great estuary of the Blackwater. All the way from Ardmore the wind had been blowing

in my teeth. Now at sight of the profound river the flesh and its annoyances were forgotten. There it lay, silver-barred, my five hundred healths to it! Would it too be strangled and garotted by Teutons, this river? I ascended the hill above the little church and, surrounded by my mythological possessions, sat down. The tide, filled with bounty, was in the first strong ebb. From my rise of ground I could see the whole onset of it to the tonant ocean. On what universal theory can the doxology of nature, can the beautiful and serene, the true, be efficiently maintained. . . . I sat on dreaming. Yet, when analysed, what did all my dreams amount to? Could all my pain and fury restore one dismembered leg to a millipede?

The rising darkness had folded the shadows of twilight; along the water front on the Munster shore the lights were old, when, pulling myself together, I made a start for the bridge that spans the head of the estuary.

Placed just below the Narrows, where the river escapes by the Castle of Rhinecrew, in the distance, this bridge seems to hang like a cobweb between shore and shore. As it first comes into view all intended criticism is forgotten. In a perfect setting. . . . I have in mind many bridges, yet, as Pigafetta said of the Straits of Magellan, "there is no better bridge in the world than this one." But what bridge is there that is not able to set the meanest of us a-thinking? Mystic things, harvests of flowers should be hung from every buttress of them. A hundred years in the Ural mountains would be a sentence light in atonement for those latest Robin Hoods who, waving the shield of a military necessity that would confound —not Davout, God's name! not Davout, but Villa—

stretched down these heirlooms of a people. War, yes; if war be needful. "War," says Brissot, "is necessary to banish from our midst the men who would corrupt." Civil War raged in Greece when the marbles of Pentelicus were not rich enough to encase her splendour. But O sweet Ireland! The Athenian of Alcibiades, the Spartan of Solon, did not levy war as if struck with a druid's wisp. What has the schoolmaster been doing these twenty years besides the tables of his wages? Primary education in Ireland . . . but I am crossing a bridge that is verboten. The death penalty is still in force in this land.

There is an outlandish bridge known as Al Sirat, sharp as the edge of a sword, narrow as Cuchulan's road through the Perilous Glen. The followers of the Prophet enjoy many privileges; but the end comes for all of us. There is a crisis, as Mary Brady said, in every life. When the crisis has come for the devout Muhammadan it is across Al Sirat he must skate to heaven. The Bridge of Youghal—I will be my own squire and tell the story—is the counterpart of that bridge.

Bridges make different appeal. Some, the fools perhaps, hang with grooms and porters over their sounding arches. Others, with robber-haste—their only arms the royal ones upon their guineas—scurry from side to sacred side under the pitiless hail of their concupiscence. To the engineer a bridge means money, to the soldier anxiety, to the orator salvation; but first and last, like the Vision of Mirza, they are things of storied symbolism. We are for ever crossing and re-crossing them across the gulf of years. Find yourself on the edge of a river without means of getting to the other side as happened me at Rhiné-

shark, and you will understand St. Paul better when he talks about the calamity of sin than if you spent your life sitting at the feet of missionaries. Cæsar experienced this. It spurred him to prodigious feats even in the literary order. But Cæsar, trafficer in words might have fallen down dead—his heart divided —had he heard of the Bridge of Youghal. It is on the scale of the banquet of Alcinous. I have not measured it; but Mr. Egan says it is a mile *wide*.

RALEGH AND THE TARSIMACULA

I AM beginning to feel like a man who had set out to penetrate a great forest. It seems so long since I left the white world without that the burning ball of the sun and the blue sky, and the salty winds, no longer matter. I have grown so accustomed to the half-light, and the noises and intricacies of the wood's immensities, they have become life to me.

Ireland and her *sorcellerie* have enveloped me. I am like a man with a large family. Their affairs are so complicated, he is so immersed allaying their rapacities, so bewildered adjusting the variety of their rivalries, so harassed getting them around one difficult corner after another, so confounded to understand what he ever did to deserve so merciless a judgment that, broken man, he has no ambition left but to divide what remains of his earnings amongst them, turn his face to the wall, and take his chance for it across that business of Al Sirat.

My plans made I had set forth as a bird liberated. One of the Truces of God had been signed. Across the tables of chequered cloth in the great palaces where Government sits, the almost mythical protagonists of the people were weighing with apothecaries weight the inveiglements of the lords of the contending host; but out on the greensward—we might not be faithless to our own standards—but to-

day we were all children of the one mother. The Rotary Club, it was said, were bringing out an illuminated Celtic edition of the "Wheel." A priest from Kerry wrote to the papers that now no longer could the Saxon put us off with either English or Summer Time : we would keep God's time. Everybody was mixing hot and sweet. It did not matter whether you went to the devil with the mass or without it, Pan was here again with his flute of Reed. The earth was lighted by a jewel hung from the vault of our imaginations. Thus, borne upon this gale of felicity, I had come to find myself rambling about this island, in search of those flowers of which the Marquis Marie Jean de Condorcet makes mention. Little was the sense that was ever in my head. I had not been a day in Ballymacaw when I knew that the heart of man was the same shuttlecock of the perfectionists everywhere. Now, between the lightness and grace of the imagination behind too often dull and heavy manners; between Power of Bonmahon and MacPherson, and the Twelve Pins, and the puzzle of Pretenda; between deciding whether the nation should assert herself and get out of bed, or if she were really as sick as the doctors said and it would be dangerous to let her function, I cannot think of anything else. I am dealing with everything as it comes up; religion and the laws civil and ecclesiastical, the rise and fall of rivers, and that trackless Gobi of incurious humanity which the famine of generations had spread wide over the land. If in the end I forget anything put it down to exhaustion. Take labour. I am with labour heart and soul in opposing military dictatorship. It is too confusing. It is worse than being ambushed by the ancient nomenclature. In the old days if a friend went to bed Hooley and woke up

Howley there was no harm done. He had either gone over to the Middle Nation, or was about to go over. Everybody understood. Everybody enjoyed it. It might be their own case to-morrow. There was fellowship in the land. Now Isaac would not recognise his father's son Jacob. It was the same with militarism. Militarism is too Czecho-Slovakian. This nation does not want to swim Niagara above the falls. It wants public men well-grounded in the principles of primitive accumulation. It wants a quiet life. Besides, unless to lay lance in rest for one another, we have no occupation for soldiers. The view of labour on this point is unarguable. If there is to be a Dictatorship, let it be one the plain people can understand. But I cannot agree with labour in abolishing ancestry. In these days when the gracious meanings of old-fashioned government are being obscured, ancestry is all that remains to us. If, as labour says, property must go, let it go. We must come into equity with clean hands. But let us remember the Count de Grammont. Let us stand firm around ancestry.

Again take pure politics. I decided long since to come down on the side which is best for the country. There was nothing else for any thinking man to do. But at the time to which I refer the Republicans were still spoken of with that respect which fear begets. It was not so easy to distinguish between right and wrong; and settle it whatever way you would, there was that ancient " three decker " in the offing, the north-eastern corner of the Province of Ulster. What was to be done about it? Would it be better for the nation once for all to fight the Orangeman as a hereditary enemy and finish with him, as the Lacedemons finished Attica, or were we to go on for ever with that

eternal pretending? or better still, suppose the nation waited until labour in that area discovered how its compass had been boxed . . . and then refused to let it in. We could, of course, from historical considerations, relent afterwards; but there was the position. Talk of a man in any prosperous line of business trying to lead an honest life! My mind was in perpetual turmoil. If I supported the farmers against Workers-in-Republics and the inevitable happened; if I declared myself for the Free State, trusting in Providence to set off its embellishments, and it turned out that I had misjudged the endurance of the other side; if I shut my teeth, hoping silently for the English to come back with their fairy wand, and they did not come, I was stranded high and dry on the let bygones be bygones. Even . . . but this must end. I must get on with the Tarsimacula.

Youghal "of the swift ships" (I speak of the ancient town, not the modern atrocity on its sea-front. Within the walls alone of this ancient burgh there were once owned 100 ships proud as the prince merchants upon whose ventures they sailed), on the point of confluence of sea and river, signifies the place of the Yew Wood. I do not wish to trespass on the domain of the guide-book makers; but in the close of the Collegiate Church (the most striking unruined ecclesiastical edifice of the past in Ireland) is a *sylvatica pendula* of unusual variety. A sapling beech having been taken up by the roots, the branches were buried in the ground. The experiment flourished: the effect produced is startling. In the church is a Norman arch worthy of examination; and looking from the chancel down the coolness to the open door you may, if your thoughts are moved that way, find the answer for yourself to the riddle . . .

that riddle about the dimness of religious light. It is a beautiful place, this church and its close; and if the verger, a tall military-looking man, be in mellow mood, he may recite for you within its vaulted silence the verse inscribed on the tomb there of Sir Edward Villiers; his resonant voice unconscious of its (the epitaph's) delicious reflections; an unforgettable experience. Youghal holds my heart! I agree with that gallant gentleman and scholar, Captain Gwynn, that it is one of the quaintest towns in Ireland. I would like to have seen it with my head on one side, under the long line of tall torches of which he speaks. But even in the cold hard light of day it is filled with an invisible smoke, the incense rising from the censer of imagination. Green waters lap it like its stones in mystery. True, to-day, as you wander about, only a murmuring hum as of drowsy bees frequents it; its potteries, its curing stations for sardines, its factories of lace and glass, its trade, Memories. But not always were its steep-sided quays a citadel of silent rats. Grave gentlemen—Lombard style—point d'appui in buckled shoe and broad-brimmed hat had once stirred them to ambitious opulence. The Desmonds had ruled here. From its college of the Seven Orders of Wisdom learning pursued for learning sake had irrigated the thirsty land. Its history, or what is left to us of it, is a bonded warehouse of romance. What armies, the foot by eight abreast drums beating, had marched from behind its leaguered walls! What hands had stolen together under its moonlit skies! What cavaliers had laughed, and gallowglasses fought, down every side street of its sleeping chivalry! for this town was a sound and trusty burgh of the Gaelic Normans. Golden oars still propel it through the lagoons of memory. And if

from all this wealth of real things I have selected one called Myrtle Grove, it is only because through Myrtle Grove we come to Ralegh, and Ralegh, with God's blessing if you study him, will put you on your first guard against the Tarsimacula; for the Tarsimacula, though he has changed his coat, is not by any means yet dead.

In Myrtle Grove, Ralegh said he discovered happiness. There he found at least passing tranquility. There too he renewed his studies of the firmament, playing under its auguries the convention he had already rehearsed with Elizabeth; only this time that shearwater which men call love did not skim over unruffled hearts. Such at any rate is the tale, if you credit the manuscript which is my authority. Nor do I see reason for surprise. Was he not in the country where life waits on the tide? What more natural, in such a setting, in a house of twisted gables under its oaken roof, than to find him undoing the breast-laces of celestial matrons; now wrestling with hermetical secrets, now writing desperate charms—writing them with a raven's wing in blood from the heart-finger, at the very stroke of midnight.

> The silk sail flaps, light breezes blow,
> You, with the love-knot in your hair,
> "Allons; embarquons pour Cythère,"
> You will not? Press her then, Pierrot.

Perhaps the work on which I rely is one of pure imagination; but I do not think so because, although there are no felicitous acknowledgments, the notes suggest that the writer had privilege of recourse to rare historical documents; that the love story is strung on the carcanet of fact. The manuscript—for God had not furnished its author with a publisher—came to my knowledge in the West of Scotland. Its

owner (at the moment) some short time before had purchased it in the shop of a Glasgow dealer, for a shilling. It should have been in the Vatican. But what can one expect from publishers? One whiff of grape only I will give them. Take the subject of that manuscript, romance. Have you ever remarked what happens when a " seller " of the first magnitude has been discovered? (The dull bookseller copies the fashion in his retail way.) First the unveiling of the masterpiece is announced. Then after a carefully calculated interval there is a fanfare in the press. Follows the private view. At last everything is in readiness. The piece stands upon its plinth. The symbol " copyright " has been put away upon the reverse side. The numbered cards of invitation have been posted and acknowledged. The climax cannot longer be delayed. Midst a hush the cord is pulled, the sheeting slips from one of the commanding pages . . . and learning pursued for her own sake creeps home to its shivering sheets to hide its penury. Done from base pecuniary motives the thing is rascally. Done however with pantouflerie of the heart—as more than one notable house has learned the secret—it may be a thing of bravery; inducing that secondary quality, παρεργον we will call it, which dips the feet into a transparent sea. It is my apology. I let fall the sheeting from a bye-page of this manuscript. Allons! embarquons pour Cythère.

" Then, Mademoiselle," he said quickly, " it is fair punishment of your heresy to be made eat the fruit. What sayest thou, Edmond . . . thou, Garrett; shall we hold the little vixen to hostage? Impress her. . . . Well said! Consider thyself then, Mademoiselle, until to-morrow's upwing of the

lark, upon parole. The tide runs at six. By the help of heaven I promise thee, within four-and-twenty hours, to prove my blossom-tree sorts out the hearts of every thrush within Affane."

As the rhythm of the voice ceased Una threw back her head, letting her eyes rest on the speaker's face.

" It is true, then," she said, drawing a bow at venture, " what gossips say. Sir Walter sorts hearts in his woods of Affane."

" In the heart of the wood is silence," he shrugged his shoulders.

But the arrow had struck. A dull red spot was burning on the centre of each pale cheek; and as it deepened and glowed and spread, Una Fitzgerald's fists tightened imperceptibly. So it was true then: the de Lacey, spinner of deceit, was making hearts with him.

" Your strange fruit may be good to eat," she said, sweeping him a curtsey so contrived that in rising the door lay to her finger's touch, " but I like not fruits or men that are stones within. The Irish tiercelet strikes swift they say. You can impress me, if you put guards on me twelve deep . . . mayhap."

The three men stood gaping at the panelled door. Under the gabled roof spiders scampered around their webs, their wits on holiday. What were those silvery sounds that buffeted them high up in their citadels, in silken shocks of mocking merriment?

" By gad! Wat, Spenser, the little she-devil's locked us in," exclaimed Fitzgerald, trying the handle of the door. . . .

The manuscript has suffered badly. Pages are missing and in many places effaced.

In Youghal Ralegh's heart was still unwrinkled.

He was still upon that road which winds through the brave country of robust manhood. Yet, even in these days, the years had begun to build their barriers about his dreams, the mirage was fading. Only the Quest called ceaselessly; for Ralegh was of that little company for whom the shadows never cease their beckoning; the shadows that in his case were to deliver him into the toils of the Tarsimacula, that were to lead him ultimately to the headman's block.

This person, to use the idiom of that old rake Kai Lung, is not concerned with the ethics of how Ralegh acquired his Irish estates. Ethics, like duty, clothe some sorry sinners. The ethics of the Milesians themselves had not been always above reproach. Besides the interest of Ralegh's property lies rather in how he lost it to Richard Boyle. In relating the story I have only one misgiving. I set out on this journey "to feed the source of smiling thoughts hereafter," not to uncover the sewers of history. When the war is over and all things righted, though a soldier may make of his helmet a hive for bees, there is little sense in making it a nest for wasps. On the other hand history is no respecter of persons, and as Ralegh's property lay for the greater part in Decies, in a way I cannot escape saying an intelligent word about it. Nor do the relations between these two men raise merely abstract questions, for no moral question is ever abstract. I propose then to compromise; say a word incidentally of Scotsmen, present you with the earl's own verdict upon his dealings with Sir Walter, offer you a slight sketch of "the whole vicissitude," as Boyle's connection with Ireland has been described, and leave you more or less to form your own judgment.

The condition of Ireland, that purple land which

England lost—for conjugal restitution is a poor substitute for wedded affection—Ireland when Richard Boyle landed there has been described, in the language of the annalists, as a land of the mourning of the wild geese, where . . . but I will give this page a missing note of whimsicality and contrast instead the writings about those days of two distinguished Englishmen. I choose not to quote Hollinshed. His " Chronicle of Irlande " is muscular, but throws the heart into too anxious and gloomy a state. Here are the words of Edmund Spenser. He is writing at the close of the wars of Elizabeth. " The Irish, one of the most ancient nations that I know of at this end of the world, creep forth out of every corner of the woods and glens, for their legs could not bear them. The land itself, which before these wars was populous, and rich in all the good blessings of God, is now become so barren both of man and beast that whoever did travel even from Waterford to the Head of Smereweeke, he would not meet any man, woman or child, save in towns and cities." And over against this writing of Spenser I place Hume. Hume is given at times to language a little injurious; but if you accept Hume (1802 Vol. 6 p. 58) upon the condition of this land before James first of that name " introduced humanity and justice among a people who had ever been buried in the most profound barbarism " the forfeiture of Ireland—what Richard Boyle called his Work of Works—may well have been, as Henry Cromwell said of its wenches, " a dispensation provided by God Himself for His servants."

Let us look into M. Boyle. Richard Boyle, great earl of Cork, landed in this country, as every reader of guide-books in Ireland is aware, with a strong trust

in his Creator and £27 in his pocket. He has not bequeathed us his memoirs. That pathological disorder was not prevalent in his century. Nevertheless —with a fine wife, a remarkable progeny, cattle, substance, titles, a standing army spurred-and-booted within his own castles, and prerogatives like the characters on the sabres of the Giaour (that possessed the virtue of changing at pleasure), it must be admitted he presents the figure of a warm, full man. If he had been a horse he might well have carried his fourteen stone—as a colt. At any rate it is true of him " that the noblest wide prospect he ever saw was the road that led him *out* of England." In the earl's day men were more or less restricted to commerce in land, but he did very well. There is no use in gilding the tables of arithmetic. Boyle found what is called Gaelic Ireland a place of skulls. It happened to be precisely what he was in search of. A ghoul is at home in a cemetery.

Goodness knows I do not lay claim to the Breastplate of the High Priest. Still I must be plain. Compared with the great Earl of Cork, Count Fathom had never lost his baptismal innocence. He cut crime into a hundred facets and polished them, until the jewel gleamed like the Star of Melchior; for crime with him was only criminal when essayed by a blunderer. Candlesnuffer to the Devil, Richard Boyle had early taken by the head-and-heels that humunculus of morality " Honesty is the best Policy," and jettisoned it. I do not mean that he discarded the thing, honesty itself. Quite otherwise. The earl's honesty was much admired in his day. What he did with crime was to use it as an engineer uses a fulcrum, to do that which without its aid was beyond his strength: or to change our metaphor and

turn it inside out, the Earl attacked crime as the Sieur le Prestre de Vauban attacked the fortress of Maestricht, in battle formation with great parallels; then having stormed it, he drew not merely an enceinte about it but pushed his outworks forward until it was impregnable; and there, like Louis XI in his Castle of Plessis, honours, blessings, riches, showered upon him. There too, in the keep of that fortress, polluted as Loches, simony, homicide, loot, perjury, every unholiness, found during a lifetime safe sanctuary and flourished; for the earl added to his talents—and he had many—this one gift of genius, like Locksley his mind allowed effortless for the wind. Every vicious chord in the human heart was played on with a Pindaric ease and audacity. And to drive home the jest, while he called the tune the dancers paid the piper. It was the dance of death for the man who missed his step.

Now I do not by any means suggest that the Earl was a vulgar entrepreneur. He was vulgar, and on his own confession an adventurer, but whatever else he was not, outwardly Richard Boyle behaved as a gentleman. All his life he recognised, and where possible observed, the conventions. He understood the significance of ceremonial. He knew the values of sensibility and arrogance. He had imagination, a taste (if sometimes at fault) for magnificence, and during the greater part of his career nous upon a massive scale. In his own country, the glimmer-box of temptation out of reach, he might have become and remained a useful, even a notable, citizen. At least it is generous to think so; but taking it in the " by and large " men like Richard Boyle, when they rise to power, are a greater scourge to society than the Anopheles Tarsimacula. They wilt its understand-

ing. They confuse its judgments. They waterlog its foundations. The solid fact that the historic origin of power is merit becomes stricken with disease.

Upon what documentation do I frame this comprehensive indictment. The State papers are there for those who have leisure to consult them. Turn to Plowden. In Plowden's day historians were either Fabii or Philini. Plowden found his headlines set by an English Prime Minister. What does he tell us about Boyle? One reference must suffice. He is dealing with the year before the rising of 1641. "The particular views for goading this Province (Munster) into rebellion," he writes, "are fully laid open in a letter to the Speaker of the House of Commons from Lord Corke . . . notorious during two preceding reigns for his rapacity." "Sir," says Richard Boyle in effect, "my humble duty to the House and you will discover with this packet eleven hundred indictments against divers disaffected people of property, with their Qualifications; and as touching the proposed war (so far as the Lord hath enabled me) I have in all things, as becometh my honour, done what is needful; so that, the Lord willing, there should be good acquittance."

Finally Ryland. In his appendix, moved no doubt by that spirit which became so well his sacred office, Ryland would offer for the Earl an apology; but at page 66 of his history he tells the unvarnished truth; how the Earl suborned justice and sent to a felon's death upon a charge of a loathsome "pretended crime of a secret nature" his own spiritual superior, the Venerable Doctor Atherton, Lord Bishop of Waterford. That was hot damnification. "How, in the name of the Equator," you may be inclined to

ask, " Could an earl lend himself to such a deed ? " I may only answer in the particular. Because in this straight-seeing unworldly prelate of the Reformed religion, Lord Boyle discovered he had come up at last against a man whose soul abhorred compromise with guilt ; against one " well qualified by his talents and spirit to go through with a suit " that would have compelled him to disgorge his wholesale plunder of church property. The trial is a foot-note to a century of history. Yet so deep the wound inflicted upon the public morality of this time by men such as Richard Boyle, the trial passed almost without notice.

The Earl, as it happens, himself furnishes a curious example of the extent of this general corruption. The idea was not new. Its originality consisted in the Earl's plan for carrying it into execution. He desired to unite himself publicly with the Deity. He had all but succeeded; when from a wholly unexpected and confounding quarter there descended a bolt which overwhelmed him. Coming to the ears of the Bishop of London, Laud, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, at this time all-powerful, that prelate's indignation at the contemplated outrage was uncontrolled. To his eleventh hour intervention the most ancient cathedral in the capital city of the country owes its escape from abiding sacrilege, from having the monstrosity, the self-erected cenotaph of this Prince of Carpet-baggers—which still profanes the Baptistry of that cathedral—*consecrated as its high altar.*

And still ! men, nay even cognoscenti, are to be found, who say that the pages of a real Irish history would make dull reading. Macabre ! why the only thing for a thousand years that Ireland ever made successfully, except strong drink (and the handicrafts

of the Huguenots), has been history. A campaign in support of the immense place the history of this land should hold in metaphysics and ontology would be a novel experiment: that all cultured Englishmen should consider it a duty to study it: that every Irishman should be compelled to study it—as a corrective—as the most perfect expression he possesses of the truth, not that progress is a superstition, but that there is only one form of progress that is never superstition.

To return to Ralegh. For some reason, whether in period or general histories of Ireland, you will find Sir Walter Ralegh referred to either in the way of tolerance, or in condemnation. He was a liar in his throat; the butcher of Smerwick; a niggard in the miserly court of Elizabeth; at best an unfortunate gentleman. Very well. Let us leave it so. On one point we are all agreed. This "literary soldier," as one historian described him, had splendid possessions in Ireland. At Ardmore, Youghal, Affane, Lismore, he had vineyards that any sixteenth century Ahab might have coveted, and lo! Ahab arose. But let the Earl give his own gloss of the transactions. In a letter written to Sir Walter Ralegh's son, a remarkable piece of writing, he preserves the evidence. Richard Boyle may not have been a noted epistoler, but he had the art of arranging his thoughts as if they flowed from a natural spring. This letter, in its revelation of character—its play on Carew Ralegh's feelings, its misleading depth or want of it, its admixture of business and bosoms, its laconic reserve of dignity—in the queer twist to it inasmuch as Boyle speaks as if the writer were his amanuensis, in the final bouleversement of its conclusion, is an original valuable piece. Moreover by the use it makes of

Ralegh's distaste of Scots, the Earl has succeeded in giving it a certain extrinsic mark or period mark.

A distaste to Scotsmen is no longer a prevalent sentiment in England. Since 1745 Scotland has been her right arm. In the time of the Stuarts however the feeling was not quite the same. In Pepys you may recall the passion was so strong that he could not be reconciled even to the voice of a Scot. Whenever the Scot preached in his favourite church he did the only thing a self-respecting Englishman could do, he slept. That James I was responsible for much of this hostility there seems little reason to doubt. James was not a figure to incite affection. He was a player on timbals of course; but the true measure of his character is attained from the bargain driven by him for acquiescence in the death of his mother. At any rate the Raleghs, as the earl was aware, had no cause to love him.

The year is 1631. Boyle has yet twelve years to run. He did not die until 1643. His soul is still in the midst of its pusillanimity. But the great Pathfinder has been laid away. His head has rolled from its trunk. The king had done his worst on him. James has followed his victim to "where beyond these voices there is peace": at least he is dead. Carew Ralegh is seeking to retrieve fragments of his sire's estate. His investigations lead him to question the deeds of his father's lands to Boyle. He approaches the earl. He might as well have approached the Impenitent thief. 1631 to 1931 the Tarsimacula never varies. The letter is dated from Dublin, 16th January, 1631, and addressed to Carew Ralegh. Even as a belted earl Boyle first and last is a Business Christian. He comes straight to the point.

"The earl," says he, "paid Sir Walter the full of what he owed him."

It might be some ancient lady curbing the over-friendly attitude of her grocer. The earl feels the monotony of having to repeat statements of this kind. It is like the rattling of vanes on a windy day. Will it be always the same—this living of the thriftless at the expense of the toilers? But as a Christian gentleman he must shoulder his burthen. If men will not mind their patrimony the penalty must be paid by someone. The earl pays the penalty and enters on detail.

"Upon the day before your father took shipment upon his last fatal voyage from Cork, the earl dined with him at Sir Randal Clayton's house, when he let fall some speeches as if he was not fully furnished for his voyage, which, the earl observing, immediately procured one hundred French crowns which he knew would be current money in any place he should put in to water or victual. After dinner, he and the earl withdrawing to a window, the earl offered him one hundred more, which he refused; upon which calling to him the Lords Barry and Roche, his son, Mr. Walter Ralegh, Captain Whitney"—saved from the waters of obliteration, whoever he was, by the accident of Boyle's anxiety to mix his testimony—"and several others who dined there; and taking his son by the hand told him how the earl had kept a continual open house for three weeks to entertain him and all his company"—modesty of the earl—"that he had supplied his ships with several kinds of provisions . . . that the earl would now press on him a hundred more which he did not want"—beneficence of the earl. And then the author of the Work-of-

Works, turning from business to bosoms, places the crown upon his epistolary achievement.

" On this (your father) addressing himself to his son, ' Wat,' said he, ' I charge you *upon my blessing,* if it please God you should outlive me and return, that you never question the lord Boyle for anything I have sold him. If the earl had not bought my land, Wat, it would have fallen to the Crown; and then one Scot or another would have begged it, from whom neither I nor mine should have had anything for it.' . . . And this," said Lord Boyle, " was the last I saw of him."

Age and the long growth of self-sufficiency may have dulled the earl's acumen. It is conceivable of course that Ireland and her grey skies never lost their magnetic grip upon Ralegh's heart; that the loss of his fair estates (56,000 acres) had often been matter of family regrets; that actuated by some sudden impulse of emotion Sir Walter would correct the impression left upon his son's mind that they had been cheated of their inheritance; that actually he did make use of some such words. On the other hand Ralegh was the earl's guest. The transactions between them, to which he would have us believe Sir Walter drew attention, were almost a generation old. One does not customarily prod dead cows in the ribs. But after all what does it matter. This earl of Cork was the father of Robert Boyle, in turn the father of chemistry. In all other aspects of him he is but a common fellow. Those curious to understand the Ireland of to-day, with its looking backward for a new Atlantis, must go back to the great lords of the Plantagenets, and beyond them to the Hill of Sanctuary.

It was with unfeigned regret that at last I made

preparation to set out from Youghal. Re-crossing the river and pushing on by the hamlets of Clashmore and Aglish, towards evening the road brought me to Villierstown; to that point in the neighbourhood of the river where it was my intention to make camp for the night. Sometimes—because "the great are different from themselves at different times"—sometimes I wish I could believe that I merited to be born in Ireland; for, to those who belong to her, Ireland is the magic Quadrant of Cornelius Agrippa. I set my lamp beneath my samovar and having made my evening meal, set forth on tiptoe down the road. You remember perhaps Gil Blas' delight when adventure opened her portals to him; when he found himself, forty good ducats in his pocket, for the first time clear of his parents and his native town. I could not hope to recapture such insouciance; yet so gracious is Time, so wide the dominion of the mind, I stepped out, care flung behind me like a liripoop.

I wish I could convey a notion, that I could explain, what the lure is of which men speak within this land. There is money in its banks, yet it could not be money. All the combined money in all its banks would not buy a square mile in the holy city of Chicago. It could not be progress. It is the only country on the entire globe with a population that tends to reverse rather than advance. It certainly is not life in the sense that word is understood on the banks of the Seine. It is not climate. There are no terraced gardens of waving palms, no indigo seas, no Sappho-scented dusk, in Ireland. It does not consist in any unusual charm that its people possess, for in the centuries that charm has been worn away. Yet the lure is there, for men confess it, stealing the heart as

Absalom stole those by the city gates. Was it a tale of Mother Goose or could it be that here, in this severed fragment of a Continent, a people were to be found who had discovered for themselves the secret that the great Roman had disguised—man's inability to do aught but vamp upon the keyboard of Creation —a people who thus far had remained steadfast to the truth that Quadrant sought to teach; whose soul had not yet been run over on the highway of Prosperity. My mind was wildly excited. In solemn key of high romance I went forward down to the little quay. Then I reached the bank where the great river was flowing.

Dexter and Sinister, how royally this ancient kingdom of the Nan Desi had been gorged! The water was dark and swirling like a millrace, a place of mighty fish. But my mind was not running upon fish. I was in the presence of one of the great nature allegories, of a deity older than the Egypt of the Pharaohs, speaking to me in a strange tongue but with gesture that I understood. The robin upon the elm near the edge of the wood had wound up his last reel before I turned to retrace my steps.

The Spirit of the River! It is not my work to spread the philosophy of Fechner. But is there not somewhere a headline in the catechism? In Gott leben weben und sin wir. God everywhere. A print to travel in! Books in the running brooks! What book has this black water—this river of Spenser and his Faerie Queen—been writing for us down its age-long race with the branching sun? Come with me down under the cliffs close to the brimming brink, and listen. I will not play the Merry Andrew with you of the jester of letters (to whom indeed, when the harp is without strings, we are most obliged).

But stand with me a moment and bathe heart and mind in this triumphant flood.

You see the water-breaks. What are they calling one to another from their leafy screens, as they skim into the broad stream that will bear them with sea-chant to the Plains of Lir? Look, the eddies! Watch them curvet like horses pawing the desire of distance as they prepare to plunge into mid-flood. Why the dazzle and music, the plangent disquiet, of all this movement? What is this wave that runs for ever singing to you and me? What is the rapture, the haste, the transporting joy upon it? The golden Wires, the sceptred Muse, the sleeping Swords, History, Prophecy rising from its hills of Pain, all here are articulate.

The Spirit of this River! of this *dulce Gallasi flumen*, fathoms deep in mystery, yet tripping to fiddler's music, how it laughs at our cent for cent, our economic prophylactics to cure a world that is sick. Is the wish father to the thought, and only far cousin to real fact, that the strange women of this land—the women of one art, womanliness—could tell if they wished the secrets of its whisperings? That, spiritual patriots, the songs by which the Beginning was made to Begin are to them national songs, vibrant things, not the curios of a mouldy intelligentzia. What is spiritual patriotism? Is it real? Did that Good Man of the indifferentists, whom we call Christ, did he really live; or is the Resurrection just a philosophy of enchantment, of being well-deceived? Flower in the crannied wall, what is the name of the art by which man unfolds thy modest loveliness? What is the soul of Ireland? Is it a figment of the imagination; or a kaoline moulded by the Potter whose wheel is the firmament? What is

the craft by which the troubling of roots is made to commence in the great barn of the earth? What is the fear we call claustrophobia? when we listen to the withered lips of age that have withered and learned nothing. What is the Force, besides that commonplace of level, which hurries these exulting waters onwards? Immortality? Assyria's Queen! might it be one with that tenuous thing? Or was this river, like life, a senseless race to feed the hunger of an amorphous infinity? . . . and nothing real, but to be well-nourished?

I may not tell. But if you are a wayfarer towards the sunrise you will understand many things.

PART III

THE HIGHLANDS

" One who must follow for ever after the dream, often overtaken by the night of discouragement and despair, but rising again to follow the vision to the end."

Lafcadio Hearn.

" The national rose of Ireland is An Roisin Dubh, the little Black Rose, not the tender red rose to be plucked with the joys of life."

Thomas MacDonagh.

FATHER HILARION

I HAD not a little difficulty in selecting for my encampment a spot that would be secure from possible intrusion, but perseverance has its reward. While the larks were still singing in the stubble I was taking the road for Cappoquin. I was not in any hurry to arrive there. My haste was merely to be astir before man waked in his lair, to see the whole unstained perfection of this land of minnesong from the very top of the morning. Thus it came, Dinoclus sharing my indifference, that by the time we lumbered in to Cappoquin it was the breakfast hour.

Cappoquin is just a dormouse of an old town. Naturally it has its excitements. You will hear the surrounding gentry calling to each other in their jovian way as they meet in the old street. There is the coming and going of traffic from the Port of Youghal. From time to time missionaries arrive. Then the Church blazes, you might be in the valleys of the Bernese Oberland; but normally the place just lazes in the sun, discussing its births and deaths. This does not mean that there is not a sort of hubbub passing through it from door to door every hour of the day; for no one comes out of the unknown into Cappoquin. And overtopping all this happiness, remote yet always near, is the great Trappist

monastery in the hills. I will not pass that way again. Perhaps my memories of it become old and wrinkled as the moon; yet, no: there is one remembrance, were the stars to totter in the frosty sky, the vividness of which will never dim. The adventure befell with the swiftness of a catastrophe.

Dinoclus, as he well might, had come in fresh as paint. In my pleasure at the oddness of the place we were rambling up and down, my mind filled with that aloof enjoyment to be experienced only in perfectly strange and picturesque surroundings. It was the hour of the in-gathering of the schools. The boys I dismiss. If the adventure rested with them it were not worth the telling. But from the country about, from every wynd and close and alley of the town itself, came girls, more girls of all ages than followed the piper of legend. May God's blessing be upon it, for Cappoquin must be the most prolific town in the whole of Europe. In Europe, because even a doctrinaire Republican—which men say is the most wicked variety—will admit we form part of Europe. Up they came, colleens in miniature, straight from the great Sculptor's chisel, in pairs and groups (there seemed to be hundreds of them), all murmuring like bees in the high woods, filling the street with the Mi-careme of innocence. Ah well! it was Dinoclus of course that did it. What there was about us I have never found out, but it was there; for they discovered it.

I know now that I was conscious of seeing it all happen. At first a mere scrutinising seriousness, it passed over their faces as you will see a shadow skim over the sea when the wind touches it; and between wind and sea I had a notion we might slip through. Fate otherwise decreed. Quicker than I can write

down these words an irresistible twittering impulse seized upon them. Down the line as with one accord they stood, smothering each other in what might be mistaken for little gusts of rapture. How nature fashions these things I am in the dark; but the devil got into me. From the point, off I went. Removing my hat as a cavalier should, I saluted a group of the second or third dignity in "teens" who happened at the moment to be directly opposite me. It might have been the signal of Paul Jones upon the *Good Man Richard*. They rose, maidens and boys, as the salmon rise from their pools in a heavy water. The town shook. The effect upon Dinoclus is indescribable. I have read about the Black Donkey of the Big Tinker. He is nothing. He is the invention of a man without experience. Like a racing wind behind the tide, for the first time, in his life perhaps, in my experience of him most certainly, this ass took to his heels. His performance at Dunabrattin became by comparison an obstacle race. The trap billowed up the nodding street until the whole world seemed in obliquity. By a feat of desperate pilotage, amidst roulades, salvos, parks of reverberating cheers, I volplaned him into what I believed was the hotel yard at the top of the town and obscurity.

Melleray lies some two or three miles north in the hills. By the time I was ready to set out the sun was baking. But the day was mine. There was no haste. And if, once clear of the town, Dinoclus reduced himself to a pace capable of being described as such at all only in the sense that he did not go backwards, I was no longer thinking about him. My mind was filled with the great monastery before me, with the effort to reconstruct for myself that day long ago, in the Shanavartha of '32, when Sir Richard Keane,

second baronet, rode out along this highway to Scrahan, as its name goes, the coarse land, with the Prior of Rathmore; on or off this time with their bargaining.

It cuts a figure of its own in history that riding-out. The Prior is stern as he rises from his horse. Sir Keane, heavier, is more of a piece with his oaks. The road had been built over the line of least resistance; but they are well-mounted. As they converse on problems of forestry, reclamation, the troubles in France and nearer home, the smoothness of their discourse is broken, now by the quick gesture, now by some explosion of the sturdy knight, against the truth-finders who would wreck the sober fabric of society that he cherished, that had cherished him. Together they make a notable group, but the Prior is fore-thoughtful. Are not his brethren without resting place for their feet, without token, recusants from their parent Melleraie, "the place of the finding of the honeycomb." True his companion wanted Citeaux: his offer had been spontaneous, even generous; if any offer of a blasted contumacious waste of heath and rocks could be generous. True also that soils more churlish than Scrahan had been wrestled with and defeated; that the brotherhood could put its back into the work. But the risk is great. More than once already he has suffered disillusionment and disappointment. There is need to be recollect. Only his will is as a promontory of rock. Arrived at last Sir Keane turned to his companion.

"This is Scrahan now," he says, "I seek no profit; but I own my property stands to gain by your establishment in its midst. You can take it or leave it."

The Prior took it and, *hoc saxum posuit,* dropping

a white stone on the spot where the monastery now stands, the Baronet wheeled his horse and the pair rode home.

"The Return of the Cistercians." You have seen it in the Great Hall of Oscar in the Leinster Lawn, where hang the masterworks of the nation?

The rule of the Trappist goes back before Plotinus; but he became incorporated (to avail of that sheltering word so often used to robe tinsel in the mantle of value), the date of the foundation of this illustrious order, of La Trappe, from which he takes his name, is only 1140. In the pontificate of Innocent II, before the barons met at Runnymede, on the confines of Normandy, in a ravine moated by nature, surrounded by hills, in fulfilment of a vow made by him in peril of shipwreck, Rotrou, second Count of Perche raised the first abbey.

The site was well chosen.

"The rule of the Trappist," says Louis Stevenson, "is one of stern simplicity heightened by the romance of its surroundings." The site was well chosen also, because it enabled this monk, with the skill on the tops of his fingers, to take into his affection the pine-tree.

"I will plant in the wilderness pine-branches."

Here and there, around a watering-place like Woodhall Spa, we plant a few thousand pine trees, preening ourselves as we crunch the yielding needles beneath our leisured feet upon our taste and bouquet; discoursing of firs as if they were a sport of our invention, as if they typified our indestructibleness; but except in Scotland, where the *pinus sylvestris* is indigenous, a giant at home in a giant land, we must travel wide to find that national veneration which it has been the prerogative of this tree to excite. Re-

ligion, romance, history, all have enshrined it. On the Gulf of Gascony, for a hundred kilometres north and south of Arcachon—the living cenotaph to Brémontier, Napoleon's Minister of Vision—some of the modern uses which it serves may be studied. By the Assyrians it was regarded as a sacred tree. Its leaves crowned the victors at the Isthmian games. The Romans did not water its roots with wine as they did the plane tree, it was too widely distributed; but they held it as we hold the willows of Cambridge, a measure of nature pressed down and overflowing; her payment for service rendered in the forgotten past. In China they fashion of the cypress their oars, their boats of pine, that fortune may follow as the current flows, with them. From China its cult was introduced into Japan. Returning westward again, we find Scripture rejoicing in references to it; how Israel played on musical instruments made from its perfumed wood; how the doors of the Temple were constructed of it; how it typified abundance. "I shall make him flourish like the green fir-tree." Nor has its treasure been withheld from industry. Its sister, the spruce, yields the white paper which is the driving power of that wheel. It is the tree of fidelity. Its kernel gives heat, its fruit flavouring, its fragrance health. In death it does not decay; and in its life—isolation in community—it resembles the life of the monk who in a special way has become identified with it.

"I will plant in the desert," says Isaiah, "the fir tree."

So at Val Sainte, Ardêche, la grande Trappe, everywhere, this monk has filled the spaces of his woods with the fragrance of this tree of frankincense. He has set the wild places of his solitude aflame like

glowing altars with its dusky beauty, providing an experience for those who visit him full of whisperings as the wine-dark sea.

At le Grande Trappe this experience has the magnificence of great spaces. You step into the forest, its trees close around you, silence is beneath your feet, shadow is the companion of your shoulder, a silence and shadow that as you advance dwarf and take whole possession of you. Yet there is no fear, because the traveller knows that here he is the guest of the forest; that if an ogre ever established himself in these woods, like the ogre in Perrault's tale he has been metamorphosed and gobbled up; that the only ogre guarding its solitude is Sanctity almost mythical.

Standing to embrace with my eyes the whole scene where the spire of Melleray first comes into view, I tried to hammer these things into my dull brain. Better turn back for Cappoquin even now unless I could leave my small-town ways at the lodge of the great hospice, unless I could approach it cleansed of all sorts of littleness. In the end I chugged on, impelled perhaps by the mountains, for, as you draw near, the wildness of the scene holds you. Within is a space of tabernacles; but without the mountains still wear the folds of a hill-form upon which nature has carved the scrimshaw of her severest grandeur. Then the road claims entire attention. Where you leave the main highway—which runs through the pass of Knocknasterkin—turning to the right for the abbey, the engineers had pitched their effort into a valley. Up or down it was little better than an esculator. There is no telling what Dinoclus' reflections were. He is a travelled donkey. He may have been this way before: the granaries of the monastery are like those of Joseph. But whatever was passing at the

back of his big eyes, his ears lifted themselves above his shapely head like agate shells. There was no time for a last collection of the thoughts before I was within the entrance gates.

There is a broad similarity about all Trappist monasteries. The buildings are vast and by their very want of architectural embellishment imposing. They have the solidity of pylons. Are they not in fact pylons, before the gates of paradise? It is difficult to give its inevitable name to the mark which sets these foundations apart. Severally detached fragments of a distinctive culture, you are conscious, despite the glow of intellectuality, of an incessant primitive pre-occupation going on upon all sides of you. There is a sensation of chill, yet intermingled a sort of suspended happiness; a growing belief that here at last is the absence of artifice. What is the exact phrase I am in search of to define that amalgam? Have you ever listened to a skilled flute-player on the bank of a river, ever heard from a little distance a flute played by an artist upon the margin of water? I think it is the most delicious thing in the whole wide world. Well, these seminaries spread around them that sort of thankfulness for life; yet whatever way you turn, there is a finger warning you that Death lives here, an honoured guest. The whole experience is one that must be undergone to be understood. It is a sort of chemical intermingling, the perfect assimilation, of life and death; an intergrouping of their intimate interactions. For this reason those who hate that which they cannot defeat would be unwise to seek out these guest-houses of simplicity. You may recall Corporal Trim's reading of the famous sermon from Stevinus: "A bad life and a good belief are troublesome and disagreeable neigh-

bours." A Trappist monastery can be an awkward and disconcerting experience. You do not put a plain snaffle on a wicked horse. The Cistercian for some reason does not cultivate euphemism in the things of God.

But perhaps it is "the sweet courtesy," the welcome, that for most of us gives to these sunny places of sanctity their most enduring remembrance.

"Surely, fair son," every Brother beams at you, "lay doubt aside. Thou art thrice welcome. Does not a platter already await thy coming in the refectory?"

And fitting fancy to fact, I had but swung around into the main courtyard—if the humility of my pace permits the paraphrase—when Dinoclus was seized upon as if he were the steed of the king's daughter. Down upon him pounced a monk, and by a monk I mean a real monk, an athlete of God; a man ripe as a cantaloupe about the heart, of cavernous smile, of elephantine sinews, Gargantuan piety. I was miserably ashamed. Passing his hand with a little patting movement down the neck and shoulders of that shameless beast, this man of God poured smiles over him. It was not decent. Knowing that ass as I knew him, his docility, the alacrity with which he allowed himself to be led around the corner of the building and out of sight, it was not respectable.

It was my intention, if I might, to remain for two or three days at the hostel. Turning to the priest beside me I told him my mind, making an offering to him of my self-determination, glad to be rid of it, atoning for its poverty by my sincerity. He stroked his beard regarding me earnestly.

"We must strengthen you in the body first," he said. "You will have dinner with us here. It will

be laid directly. Then we will hand you over—for the retreat."

Suddenly he rapped out an apology, and with the legerity of a leveret disappeared through a door in the upper end of the wide draughty hallway, leaving me, as suddenly, immensely sorry for myself altogether.

In an instant he re-appeared.

"There are twenty minutes," he said. "You would like to come with me; to see that your little donkey is at home for himself."

At the moment I had no suspicions. The large, innocent, round-eyed thought-behind was staring me in the face, the brilliancy of the priest's eyes unable to conceal it, and I stood there before him, blind, seeing nothing. It was next day when all his manœuvres dawned on me. He would have me stayed with the richer fare of the general salon before I came under the stricter rule of the *retraitans:* he knew that I would wish to see Dinoclus yerking his tail about like a cornflail, munching his black oats. Agreed. But with his vast, orthodox, sophisticated simple pride in the great monastery he wanted also that I should catch—with him—the first glimpse of its activities; for the cloister is a hive filled with the rich honey of provident labours. Apart from the general business of the house and the work during leisure hours of his own predilection, each one has his appointed task, upon the service of the church, in the schools, at a trade, on the farm, in the laboratory. The place shuttles like a syllabus of ants. What more natural than this desire to enjoy my first wonder in all I saw, the great quartern loaves browning in the caverns they call ovens, the current whirring from

the monastery power-house, everything he could cram into those undivulged most precious minutes.

A Trappist monastery is austere beyond belief. Here truth is TRUTH and has no other definition whatsoever. Truth first: then austerity. There is no corner round which you can escape from the wintry blast of its relentless austerity. Hours laid upon hours of prayer; sleep in the cerements of the grave; seals on the pliant tongue; eternal vigilance of the mind; during the great fast—from September to Easter—the collation of a bird with one meal a day. There is no self obliteration about the Trappist. He is frankly, honestly austere.

During one of my conversations with Father Hilarion (of whom I shall presently speak) he expressed regret that I could not be with them for the Feast of the Nativity. As he spoke of that day his eyes shone as the great altar shines, with a hundred lights, for then the soul of the Monastery takes fire. As from unfathomable fountains its adorations rise before the crib of Jesukin, no golden cradle under Him. I thought of the Provost and Fellows of . . . Oxford: noble fellows too, but living at the other end of the town. At that moment in the aisles of Father Hilarion's church when the Abbot closes the day by which Faith lives, hark! from the quadrangle sounds the trumpet's clarion; the procession sinuous sways.

List! the carolers. "*Caput apri defero . . . reddens laudes Domino.*"

But what is this upon the silver dish . . . a Boar's head! And look, the portals! Strong upon their doings the mummers are entering between the wide-swung portals.

The faces of Provost and Fellows now are good to look upon. The carols peal. The gala-festooned hall

is swimming in unnumbered lights. Four times the mummers round it from end to end. "Patience, Senor; it is well content one should be just to be here. There will be plenty of time for its cheer presently, without a slur on anyone. Look up the hall. Sir Boar already rests within his silver couch, upon the very pivot of the great High Table. One moment! and you will see the service swing, of the High Festival of Christ's Mass."

It is the Oxford manner. Dost think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale? The austerity of the Trappist is the austerity of Christ in the Hall of Pilate. But what Wizard put the tremble into the mackerel sky? What Artist gave the woodpecker his green shot hues? Who put the riffling murmur into the summer sea? What fairy dropped its fragrance into the woodbine's whorl?

Father Hilarion, as I prefer to call him, happened to be deputising for the Father hospitaler. It accounts for my good fortune in meeting him. How shall I speak of him? His antlered thought has drunk from the well-heads of learning, yet his thoughts are written on his brow. His mind is a granary, every loft full to overflowing, every grain to his hand, yet the position he assigned human reason clothed his part in it with unaffected simplicity. He had the bearing of blood. In youth he must have been a messenger of speed. His voice was musical. His face was one seen only on men who have won the complete victory over old Silenus. What more may I say? That his manner to me held the infinitely acceptable unconscious flattery of Master to beginner; unconscious, for he is much besides a Parnassian: he is a very great gentleman. Except his memory that is my remembrance of him. His memory was an

altogether new experience. It was like a great book, the leaves of which he was for ever fluttering with the delight of a child in a new rhyme book; for ever lifting out of its fletestre the rarest oddments of erudition. It was a resurrection of memory. You are in a great wood where the sap is always rising in stem and bud, where stirrings, rustlings, little puffs are going on around you everywhere; where it is always spring. As he talks the whole forest hums with expanding life. Walking beside him is like walking along the margin of a great ocean. The merest flotsam, as he floats it within the activities of the humblest companionship, becomes treasure . . . but let me present him to you.

We had been talking of history, of Belfast; of those qualities in its captains of industry which had raised it to so enviable a position in the world of trade, of its weaknesses.

Did I know the genesis of the Orange drum, he interrogated. It had never before occurred to me to think anything about it, except its noise. I hazarded it had come with William . . . of William and Mary.

"The root is deeper," he shook his head. "In the department of Vaucluse in Southern France, there is a little town, Orange it is called. You may know it."

I had not heard of it.

"It lies near our monastery of La Trappe d'Aiguebelle," he said simply. "In the days of Augustus it was a Roman colony. Even the little modern town lives under the shadow of Rome. It is a mediaeval story."

He paused to arrange his facts.

"Those Guelphs and Ghibbelines, Mr. Davidson,

they are like the lar and starboards of the mariner. One is never sure which is right. But the Guelphs, I think, were the party of the Popes. Well, Guelph drummers were notable people. Drumming—the address, the roulade, the flourish—was elevated by them to an art. Avignon, the neighbour of Orange, is the capital of Vaucluse. When the popes came to Avignon, the drummers came with them. The art spread to Orange. Orange was then an independent principality; for in those times soldiers were not content with statues to their valour. They erected instead, for themselves, those little states which once were dotted over Europe. They found the fruits more substantial. Orange for long maintained its independence, in the end passing through the distaff side to the Counts of Nassau, and through them to the Low Countries. The Low Countries did not know very well what to do with it. It was a stray lamb. Ultimately, after two centuries, it found its way back to France. Meantime, however, two things had happened. It had given its name to these Dutch Stadholders. The cult of the Drum passed north. William Henry, Prince of Orange, that distinguished soldier of the later reign of Louis XIV carried it west. *Illic jacet.*

"I have never heard the Orange drum," he mused —I thought there was regret in his voice. "But it is strange, that story. Do you know," he said suddenly, "you would, of course, but may not have thought of it in the same way, that thing, about the wave lengths of green and yellow light, how the microns of one fade into the other. Interesting, is it not? Do you think at all, after a time, Mr. Davidson, like Red Piers of Kilkenny, they will come to

claim a share in the Tradition, these Orangemen? One cannot be always taking wasps' nests."

I was thrilled by his weaving of facts.

"I am afraid of the Motu Proprio," I made feint at him.

"Ha," he said laughing, "the poor priests. But are the Papal colours not one-half orange? You see we have a double claim upon them." Then a vibration crept into his voice. "The north-east, the north-east!" he exclaimed. "We were speaking of Southern France. In France are many mansions, Provenceau, Basque, Breton, Walloon, Burgundian, Norman; yet there is only one France. But the fault was with us, Mr. Davidson—somewhere—in the past—be sure of that—with ourselves—a chastisement. A nation must put on the whole armour of God."

He paused. I watched his face for it was agitated.

"The whole is greater than the part, greater than the part," he said softly. "The life of nations is above men. It is not in the sample-cases, or in the pistol-butts, of the gendarmerie of peace or war. It is not in the keeping of the shapers of words. It is in the keeping of God. A nation's life is in the memory of every light and shadow of her history. It is in her harvests, which the Lord ripens before the generations of her sons. It is in the fruits of her valleys where her story is folded. It is in her hills and the melodies of her hills. Ireland is a mantle of the spirit around her children. There is but one Ireland, Mr. Davidson; and time is with her. Time is the ally of nations. No man permanently takes pride out of his great toe, or is it the heel of Ireland. Every woman is to her own man. It is the Divine law. . . . But it is droll, the drum."

The discourse of this priest is lifted with that simple

eloquence which is the gift of the Holy Ghost to saintly men. The mind is caught up, held in balance. It came upon me as a surprise, which was my ignorance, his propinquity to a world in which religion has become a frivolity, frivolity a religion. We talked of the most unexpected subjects. Woman. I contrasted his vision of her with the women of the evangelists, then with the full-blooded performing animal, for whom some romancers to-day ask us to provide stable-room.

We discussed industrialism; and at the end of it you will understand why, looking back, I murmured to myself, "Nature: mais oui! nature is beautiful . . . but life, life is triste. Triste, uncertain, ring-straked, gusty!"

In the course of argument I had admitted to him, that while conceding the wholesale co-operative movement of the Webbs to be a step in the right direction, I was a believer, with reservations, in a Republic of Workers. All human institutions are fallible. It might not work out like Euclid. But it could never touch the depths of ethics-generally. It was a subject about which at that time I felt emotionally. Emotion leads men down strange paths. Could Dr. Pangloss have been there, in that garden of Melleray, he might have listened to me that day and been edified. I put my boat upon the waves and delivered what I believed to be the Thermopylae of Ah Sin.

I spoke of industrialism, "a withered branch that's only green at top," and of its troubadours. I compared the wail of the toilers to the bell of a foundering ship. I pictured the dawn of their respite upon the Mount Taber of a new liberty. I spoke of the hierophants—white blossoms in their hands—of humanity. Then turning again I poured scorn upon

the apostles of individualism, upon their brindled Press. I mentioned apostles as if they were so many spoons. "Evil men," I perorated, "have been allowed too long to follow chicancery and call it a profession; plunder and call it business; rascality and call it 'the authorities,' planing hand-smooth the faces of the poor."

O, aya! I, who had studied to write nothing in a hundred chapters, who had learned silence from a profound teacher of words, where had the technique of suggestion behind the pregnant phrase—in which I had schooled myself during the long years—taken wings? Even in policy it was a slip. Father Hilarion is the Lord Chamberlain of gracious, pertinent, original discourse; but first and last he is a condenser of steam.

He nodded his head smiling pleasantly at me.

"Just so," he said, "I begin to forget my history; but somewhere, at Leeds I think—it must be nearing a century now—was there not a Declaration of similar Faith? Shall we call it the Council of Leeds? And before Leeds—Menander. And between Menander and Leeds—how many? There are some lines of Menander which come by halves to my ear."

He intoned the rhythms of the Greek poet.

"You cannot change the heart in men, Mr. Davidson," he said, "it almost defeats God. Love only is its morning, and evening, star."

We took a turn up and down the garden without speaking. "It is many years since Menander delighted the Athenians with his wit," he continued presently. "Were men's hearts less obdurate then than in the Ur of the Chaldees, than St. Paul found those of the Thessalonicans, than they are to-day? You think that Communism would effect a change.

The heart of man has pursued many illusions but never one more visionary. I am not unaware of the menace of industrialism, of its sinister efficiency, its brutalising repetition; but Communism will not avert its disaster. As a scholar those lines of the great Greek will appeal to you."

His speech was like the music of flageolets. I was not, however, thinking about music at that moment. The futility of deceit had overwhelmed me. Latin, is my attachment to it not proved by the plenitude of my quotation? Have I not ever understood, laying my duty upon her hand, the feelings of that lady who honoured Dr. Blimber with her heart; 'if she could only have known Cicero and talked with him in Tusculum, and been his friend, she would have died contented.' I was nurtured on Latin, on the tonsured ceremonial of it; but Greek! Greek, with its branches about it, never unified in my brain. I committed to the depths of the sea and its resounding confusion the one accursed phrase about its noise, the sound of which—like a spectre—had pursued me from that squitchy chaos, my secondary forsooth! education; that had been in part responsible for now leading Father Hilarion to believe that I had, so to speak, lived with the Nine Muses.

But my sin was deeper, more reserved. It is true that earlier in the day—I was leaving next morning—I had pooh-poohed a suggestion of its scholarship, but my pooh-pooh was made in that sort of a way which left it open to doubt, whether I had not at one time thought only in the Greek language. Defeat leaves man bare-footed. The measured roll of the Greek metre washed back and forth through the omphalo of my brain. In my distress I laid hold upon the "heart of man," striving to speak bravely.

"Remove the cause," I said, "and the evil disappears. With equality the rich will shed their lusts, the poor their hatreds."

"It will not do, Mr. Davidson," he replied. "We may not cheat with facts. Inequality is one of the most excellent of God's gifts to man. Difference is the colour of life. 'Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the King.' Has Communism anything as satisfying to offer humanity? There must be inequalities just as there are the things of Caesar and of God. The good steward is faithful in all things." He paused in that way he has. "But I would wish you to tell me about these Webbs," he said, "I seem to have heard the name."

"You will hear of them some day," I said, "riding upon elephants. They are called Sydney and Beatrice —Fabians."

"Ah, Fabians!" he said, "the people who follow the lanterns on the end of their own poles. I remember. But the only road that can ever enable us to approach our ideals was pointed to us on Sinai."

We were walking up and down the main path of the great kitchen garden.

"I had once to serve some comrades in a tight place"—he seemed more to be communing with himself than to converse with me—"I need not, perhaps I may not, retell the whole story, but the body must be fed. When commons are short the faces even of lords may be long. My skill however passed muster. We came into safety." He half-told a tale of desperate hazard. "I still try to convince myself, you see, that my resource was helpful. Aliensis studiis delectatus. The point of my recollection is the knowledge to which it led me of little things called

jelly-bags. They serve now to convey my thought. For filtering jelly they are invaluable; but a Brillat-Savarin could not make use of them to cook venison. The law of the Almighty may be rejected; but it cannot be strained through the sieves of science. The resultant is not the law that He has commanded us to observe. Life to-day holds difficulties in such dense solution that the most courageous are at times dismayed; but when rulers and ruled observe, in the letter and the spirit, the law which He who 'made everything beautiful in its season' laid on all flesh as a rod, for its salvation to itself, for its sanctification to Him, these difficulties will be found precipitated. Even as a philosophy faith is the sanest solution of life."

He stopped suddenly in his walk. "Is sin—pride, covetousness, over-reaching, lust—worth the material price that man will soon be compelled to examine it is costing him." He spoke almost fiercely, throwing out his hands. "Its price spiritually—oh! oh! . . . And when the Reaper has passed where lieth the gain, for gain of which man is ruining himself . . . and his world? When the long night cometh wherein is the richest and proudest better than Ned the Beggar or Sean the Fool; save where obeying God he has served the brother? But I am *precheur,*" he said, with sudden abashment of his throb of emotion.

He was smiling again with charming frankness. "Universal peace," Mr. Davidson, "do you think they will come to agreement about it? Youth will not follow the drum again . . . ever."

I believed I saw his body stiffen. Thought will keep flying upon tangents. The name of the great abbot, Armand de Rancé, tingled in my ear. Even in la Trappe there is that hole in the wall. It was

whispered this priest (of great family it was said) had lived torrid splendid days. Myths grow like mushrooms. We believe as we wish or as we imagine. There was that half-told story. Had Father Hilarion, like Loyala, once tossed his shako to the soldier's song?

When I looked again he was just an ambassador of grands seigneurs. But curiosity had been stirred. Strive as I might, my mind would keep wondering what romance found death in that capacious bosom, when this priest came to lie here *perdue* to that world which still interested him so greatly.

"Armand, Armand John de Rancé," my tongue kept twisting in my mouth.

The writing in Belshazzar's hall. A history of sinners immunised! What a book! redder and whiter than roses; real romance, filled with names distinguished in remembrance. David would be in it and his son Solomon, and the Magdalene and Paul of Tarsus, and Heloise and Augustine. And Armand de Rancé would be there, taking us back to days when life began and ended a bal masque—for the French kings knew how to drape inclemency—transporting us along the valley of the kings of France, that champs elysées where the history Amoureuse des Gaules was written; where too, high up in her chateau above the Indre, a glimpse would be caught of Marie de Rohan, scarlet-stained, spinning her web. Heart's disgrace! why did she labour so feverishly, this woman who in every passion loved herself? It was unusual game maybe; but did not her mirror reflect a pulchritude everlastingly invincible?

The Duke de Saint-Simon, doing credit to his heart, would have us believe that his friend, then advanced in years, had never enlisted in the service

of beauty; but the temptation and fall of the Abbe de Rancé will always remain one among the great tales of gallantry. Well-born, gifted, gaining of education all its distracting grace, Armand de Rancé may have dallied a little with the devil before his steps became entangled in the briars of the de Montbazan. Why blame him too sternly? Love had not yet been ruled out as an encroachment on the rights of society. It was an age when dancing satyr girls beat the ringing ground in every glade. And there is this also to be said. When the young priest sensed the danger in which the assiduities of the enslaver had envolved him, he pulled, as oarsmen say, forty to the minute. In a supreme effort to save himself he sought sanctuary in flight . . . and Rome. But the air is light in these southern lands, light summer air and gossamer, and gossamer they say may bear a siren's thoughts.

"Sin, sweetheart; what fool's babble! Life is the waves you watch upon the Tyrrhenian Sea, without beginning or meaning end save love."

The Abbe is sore tried. Is it true about those two things which the experienced say we have no armour against, misfortune and the apotheosis of love? The image of the temptress in his heart, her heart his wound, the hurt festers in the hotter clime. Through interminable days he swings back and forth, yielding, repelling, battling with emotions blurred and strange to him. But the wolves fang him finally. Imagination lending to his sense licentious ear—phantasmal semblance of beatitude—in one delicious draught of Lethe he folds the beast's skin to him in mind and in intent and lashed by passion, speeds through leaning Pisa, Piedmont, Provence, across the plains of France, to Indre and the chamber of her dalliance.

It proved a famous journey.

Tethering his horse to a tree upon the edge of the forest, at last de Rancé halts. Long he embraces with his eyes the flowing lines of that castle, noble even among the castles of the Loire, which she, who commanded love, called home; Her, the graces of whose mind were only matched by the perfection of her shape, the freshness and tender loveliness of her unrivalled face.

Couziere sits high above the rapid Indre. It is patrician ground. "Every door is barred with gold and opens but to golden keys." Strange it should be accouched in gloom this day of days. What place has gloom in chateaux like Couziere? But Marie would not know that *he* had come.

Stealing from the wood the priest is purblind.

"What do we with it?"

"Behead it. There is no resurrection for cocottes like her."

"Ay, ay; pox on it, behead it."

"Admit the lady was no kitten, Jean, who doth it then? We have no order."

"Cast lots."

"Odds' life, it is a pretty game! a playful coffin! The sport of a dwarf, I swear; a *toadshen*, big chin and beak, with mind as crooked as his twisted body."

"St. Anthony! it's good enough I say. A trollop that looked a poor man through as if he were some carrion."

"Ha, le petit Jean! so lies the land. My lady was not discriminating with her pleasantries. And thou so saucy, well-made a lad!"

"Shut your fools' talk, you three, the place reeks like a shambles."

"Excuse to rinse thy dirty cistern pipe, mon Jacques, in liquor thou art not used to, pudding-brain."

"Art sure 'twill take the torso if we lop the head?"

"Yah; are your eyes moles?"

Livid as a faded leaf, slack-jowled, damp with perspiration, can this dishevelled figure flitting through the secret door be him, proud scion of an arrogant disdainful Church, god-child of the Cardinal Richelieu, young levite of the stars of a few months before? Are these the gifts to him from her whose kisses were a burning scar? Struggling with the dark he curses the tortuous distance withholding her from his belated arms. The panel to her door is won. The panel, yes; but where the spring? Yet she herself, with touch so soft that all his senses burned still, had placed his finger on that very spring. . . . The panel slides. He springs within. Armand de Rancé is face to face . . . with God.

Candles of Death!

A coffin! What witches' mummery was this? Questioningly the priest moves across the darkened room, for mockery of death was frequent sport. Then stooping to gain closer view he leaps, backward, as if an asp has stung him. The smell is riotous. Millions already germinating where one abode. Like a blast of ribaldry on the ear, a whiff has plugged the gangway of his nostrils. Apprehension clutches him. This was no devil's mockery.

Giddy, a soul at the kelpy bottom of its life, seeking the slimy mercy now of fear he turns, searching for hope. Between the guttering candles, upon the table by the window, the handles of a silver dish project from beneath a reddened cloth. He had not noticed

it before. In a step he is across the room. Then some impulse—the gambler's final throw—arrests his hand. He braces himself, mumbling a threadbare prayer. . . . Great Majesty of the Living God! Decollated, a head, her head! . . . Marie. . . . Heart's ease!

I am not sure that the chapter on Armand de Rancé would be what a country clergyman might call "helpful"; but it would be a variant on the triangle, with God in the apex angle. Originally cunning, the story *à trois*, raised to the ninth power, robed in the vesture of psycho-analysis, has worn flimsy and tatterdemalion; a pageant of undistinguished victims of psychiatry.

And this story would tell how Marie, Duchesse de Montbazan, peerless but yesterday among the adultress fair, plaything of eternal falsehood, henna-dyed, thirsting for turpitude and length of days, her polished body robe of smoking violent voluptuousness, was blasted with a fell disease by the patience-outworn God; how the joiner had made the coffin short; how swept by a very whirlblast of fear the now awakened, stupefied, o'erwhelmed priest fled from that cabinet of nakedness, of horror, from himself, pressing the yielding strength of his deep-breathing sin-unconscious horse, a thousand phantoms hard upon his heels, to his benefice of la Perche; le Ferté-au-Vidame, that fastness in the lakes and hills where lay the monastery of la Trappe.*

* Despite the authority of Chateaubriand and others this account of the conversion of the Abbe de Rancé has been stoutly controverted, and not always with the merit behind it of Saint-Simon. But no amount of profane sophistry can alter the responsibility of sin for salvation, and Marie de Bretagne was Sin without garments, a colossus of sin. Three facts are not in dispute: The sudden death of the duchesse. De Rancé's attachment to her. His subsequent pursuit of pure spirituality.—Author's note.

Clever old gentlemen insist that the only books in this world worth reading are bank-books, that the fragments of the authors of all others should be burned at the stake, in a bonfire of their own volumes. A bank-book is sometimes security against the tongues of the ineffectual. There is a good deal might be said many ways for the argument. But the wise sayings even of old gentlemen must be examined both syllogistically and illatively; they must be regarded from the aspect of what concerns reality, what unreality. They cannot be accepted unconditionally. To this however we may agree. If some bank-books are like the moon on the fourteenth day, others make but sorry reading upon any day; and there are days when the most curious pieces—be they of gold or genius—afford cold comfort; when even the little stocking, laid away against the hour of adversity, fails to ease the ache in the heart; days when the wind moans and the fire burns low, and the whole world seems somehow to have gone wrong for us.

Yet mercifully such days are few; for literature is hundred-gated.

And now the rhythm of the pages alters. Time has gathered the red roses in her lap. The healing of nature, Jerome, Jesus, has been poured into the bruised and trampled soul. The harmony of viols sounds through the music of the words. And we would read how the world was agog. The fame of la Perche had reached it.

"A School of Perfection in the forest of Bellegarde, la la! but men are far-fetched. But is it true what rumour says about this priest?"

"Yes, yes; we know. He is of prodigious penance: the king is honoured in being allowed to honour him: he wears the mantle of St. Robert. There was a

declension too in the famous abbey, n'est pas? The monks had tired of studying the blue arch of the sky. He is the reformer of Citeaux. It was immense . . . all that! But was there not something wide agape? A coffin? A woman? Have you not got details?"

And the route of life is checked . . . while a second slips from the escapement of siderial Time.

There would be many nicks worthy remembrance in that history of sinners. It would help faith; and in one's careless hours it becometh a gentleman to doff his feathers to the Church. But Father Hilarion —what business had my tangents got to do with him? What business had he with thoughts like these? Little enough, God knows. It was gossip, these torrid days. This priest is a sinner as St. Ultan was: his sins exist only in the sublime humility of his heart.

Is Melleray an advance-post on the hills to-day of the regathering hosts, not of particularism, but of triumphant Christianity? This "place of honie" rises from climax to climax: of the richness, accent and volume of its services—music exultant when the psalms rejoice, weeping when the burden of their song is sad—only a scholar learned in the learning of Palestrina may speak. Like a figure in a half-remembered dream it haunts the memory. It is to me another gift from the good Ryland. And yet, despite all these things, I am not certain, were the chance mine, that I should decide to retire here, even as a retraitant. If it were near the sea, perhaps. The bells I would come to listen for. There would be the wind among the pines, that drifting melody of the wind which is like nothing else. There would be the great library too; and the sessions with now one, now another of the brethren. In the cubicle I call my dressing-room is a little print of that Rembrandt

picture, "The Pilgrims of Emmaus": there would be the perpetual companionship of men whose lives are that picture. Above all there would be escape from that leprosy—the lying tongue. It is a big credit account. But as morning arose over the Finisk valley, as every perfection and play of its early light upon the mountains lay round about me, as I beat down the hill under the needles of the shapely firs—a gift of fruit such as it was honourable to be seen departing with in my cart—I knew its arms would never enfold me. The surge of my vagrant blood was pounding like cathedral organs through my veins. This place of wings, the only wings that Ireland ever had, this rock which the Trappist had changed into a garden of the Hesperides, was for others. Let me be outright and plain. I am not of the chosen. I was never even called. A man of deeply religious sentiment—a clergyman to be candid again with you—speaking to me one day of a lady we both esteemed:

"She is a nice body, Cosby," he said, "but poor."

"Poor," said I like that, for I wanted to be sure I had the right sense of the word.

"Poor," said he, "she is very poor. Even before her father—you remember old Dinty Moore—got that queer sort of a fall off his horse that half-paralysed him, the Flurrie-Moores never had any dry money. They just had the land. Now the land itself is set up to the hall door."

I wish it were in me to convey the feeling with which he spoke; for well the good man knew it is the flail of Oscar for a poor man in Ireland. But was there more to it? The values of poverty and riches, the frightful meanings of them behind what may appear the plain meanings? If this holy man did

not know them, who did? Did I detect a deeper vibration in his voice? My heart dropped into my soles. Little good it has ever been my pondering the source and end of things. I can never buy debentures, or even the corresponding thing to a lottery ticket, in paradise. A mendicant's sufferings, the frithguild of "Ned the Beggar and Sean the Fool," the abundant humiliations of the poor, if these are not candles before me, it is on the hearth of fiery plains, it is in the lake of cold, that I will find myself.

SONS OF THE MORNING

THE outward limit of my journey had been reached. I was now on the home track, travelling against the sun, into the wild territory skirting the foothills of the Monevullagh mountains.

Almost from the first moment of setting out I took wrong turnings. Then I went completely astray, misguided first by a youth, who under the influence of some spell suddenly lost the use of his tongue; next by two slips concerning whom I will only say that in the intervals of meaningless giggles they set me at right angles to the road I should have followed; then by the road itself, which without any assistance kept breaking up and complicating itself every half mile or two before your eyes; lastly, by one foreigner or another—for my belief is that in these parts a foreigner is a man who has penetrated beyond his homestead into the next townland—for no one seemed to know where any place was; until between the jigs and the reels, by the time it was dusk I found myself nowhere that I could discover near the caves it had been my intention to visit; but in a place by the name of Seskinana, or convenient to it, an enlivening neighbourhood enough maybe, in the sense that it is surrounded by rocks and broken valleys and was in fact, and is by nature that sort of a stony skeleton of a

place where, since the world began its broken music —the plots and counterplots of the commencements of history—has been scored; and haunted too into the bargain if my information were correct: a country in short as difficult to get in or out of, and involved and tied up in a knot as this sentence, by which I would describe it.

In the backbone of the Donegal Highlands there is a hollow. It is the loneliest place, I think, in Ireland; remarkable too because the swifter-river which feeds Lough Veagh takes source there; and Lough Veagh, the Konigestuhl of Ireland, is the most picturesque sheet of water this side of the Gotzen Alp. I recall the place because I experienced there, not the phantasy, but the understanding presentation of fear. This fear now took possession of me. You cannot command fear of this kind. It comes, grips, and you are no longer normal. This end-piece of earth into which I had strayed, in which night found me, was bare not merely of human habitation, but of any animate thing of any kind or description. Between me and the fading sky lay nothing but amorphous, ridges of darkness; yet as I stood there looking about me, a human voice—quite near me—rose and fell and swelled again; a boding wail ending on a high note half menace, half despair, that left me, heated after my exertions of the last half hour, shivering in goose flesh. With all my senses taut I listened, waiting for heaven's knows what. I do not want to re-experience what I felt during these minutes. If ever in my life I had said word against priest or parson I then paid my full hadbote.

As it turned out, ghost or wraith, it ended at that; but had the sound been repeated, dark and mountain

bound as I was I would have wheeled and fled. In the cities of men it needs imagination to visualise the strength of mountains, the fear when night is abroad that stalks among the creases of them, the nebulous commerce with the supernatural which the large dealings of nature have power to create.

There is an eastern tale that when man first flung Deceit into the eyes of Light, blinding her, in punishment the gods divided Brightness into day and night; so that fear might be always close to the heart of his deceit. Night leapeth into the lap of Fear. In Ireland we should have escaped this dart, for we had our stone of Truth. But even before the Saxon came—because we must be just above all things—an accident happened to it. The heart of the stone was broken. Being against the ADVERSARY I will not tell the story; only to recall that when she was standing on the stone, spying a man she knew too well away on the mountain, the woman swore to her husband she had never done anything she ought not to have done—no more than with that man on the skyline. It was too much for the stone. It fell asunder.

But I may not run away with this territory.

"A ruined church was near, the spot around e'n though sepulchral ground was beautiful." That fear which is not alarm—that uncomprehended affinity of the natural and spiritual which the great lonely places of earth have power to excite—might be about me; but for the rest, looking back now, may it not have amounted to no more than this: I had been going the road since early morning. I was tired. My nerves were not hitting on their cylinders. In Ireland, with its restricted fauna, there are no lurking risks. In

reality, below the surface, it was strong joy that was in my interior. This had been classic ground. Somewhere among those amorphous ridges of night Red Donough MacNamara had kept bright the breastplate of learning (when learning ranked with treason-felony). I had the fellowship of Dinoclus. My fire was throwing pleasant shadows. A little brook near-by kept up its friendly chattering; a comfortable sound like the distant sawing of wood upon a summer's evening. There might be poor shelter here on a rough night. But if the winds, the big sisters of the mountains, could torment this solitude, they were absent to-night upon other errand. The night was an eastern night. If only for the moment the sign was on my forehead of the primitive, the best in man; that mark which roots the husbandman in his fields; that is the spirit behind sport; that had dismissed the adventurers of the ages upon their forgotten wanderlusts.

The bustle of the dawn was afoot when I awoke. I could see where the sun, already shining in his attitudes, was preparing to gild the hill-spurs. Drawing water from the stream I set the gas of my stove aflame enjoying its warmth for a moment, for the air was keen. "Breakfast," said I, "must be worthy." I had carried all the way with me unused a small but comely piece of nappery. I spread it out now with an exact care. Then I laid out my bread and the fruit of the monastery. As a touch of higher art I gathered a handful of cress, pressing it into the double service of a fine herb and table decoration. Finally giving Dinoclus his share of bread, I poured out one, two, three, four cups of my Russian tea, for whatever may be said about Russia, its tea is the tea

of liberty. It was a breakfast to charge enthusiasm in haurient. I was now ready for adventure. I gathered up my accoutrements, and invoking St. Philip, the apostle, set forth in spirited manner to renew my search for the great road of Fews.

Now when I speak of adventure I do not wish to be misunderstood. Like Sebastian de Vauban, we too have swum rivers under musketry fire. We do these things. But normally Ireland is a small country. Even in adventure we have to be content with the unambitious. But if we have only small beer to chronicle we will give the branch to the other people who can draw and froth, and pour it out, with the same bearing. It would take me a long time were I to relate all that happened about this day, for like my breakfast the very day itself was charged in haurient. The morning had been all right. Every king of faerie was moving with his train through the freshness of it. But as the heat began to filter through the coolness of the earlier hours, little sleeveless puffs of wind kept coming down off the steep-sided mountains, playing some game of hide-and-seek through its gathering warmth, blowing now here, now there, then off with them, only to return back the next minute, until . . . well, until it was worse than the road; and of that road I can say with satisfaction —because it becometh the wise to speak wisdom foolishly—that no road since the world began was ever so uncertain whither it was going, or whether it was a road at all, or what it was. But there was perseverance in it; for in the end without a note of warning it just unwound itself, and we were on that highway smooth as glass, under the escarpments of the Comeraghs, which carries the life between Dungarvan

and that ancient villayet which stands at the tidal headwaters of the Suir.

It is a common belief in Ireland that there has never been gathered together in any part of the country a crowd of any kind, but a Kerryman was in the thick of it. The reason given for this belief is: let a half-penny fall on the heads of that crowd and always it was found to have alighted on a Kerryman. A lucky people. Some writers maintain—advancing ethnological reasons in support of their contention—that it is Cork, not Kerry, with which this tradition is associated. I cannot agree with them. What is more, the people of this great kingdom deserve their luck. They claim to represent—outside the strategic value of our property as an island—the entire of international interests in us, and it may well be so. I have in mind the diversions of Antrim, the claims of Down; but Kerry, at the other extremity of the diagonal, comes first. Where did the black cattle and blue terriers, and the puckauns like antelopes, come from? From where did the wit, and beehives and holiness of Ireland draw their strength and distinction? Were the deep-sea voyagers, Maeldun and Brendan, strangers to that kingdom? When the Wild Geese took flight, where did they rise from? Was O'Connell reared in the Pale? In olden days if a friendly foreigner wanted a place to land, did he select the Ballast Office?

Kerry with its fiords and forests, its Reeks and Lilies, and the Days of its Dances, gives elegance to the nation. And if they are lucky, it has not been always with them that the wiser advice got the better. In the hour of hard engagement they had ever dressed their banners in front of danger. In the day of battle

they have not slept on their bridles. "The man for Galway" may be a phrase with some meaning in Connemara. We may leave the west to its playboys . . . if such ever existed. Kerry, with its women of Eros, its men with a right hand for fight or friendship, is kingly as the king. There is a story told of a Kerryman who, at his wits' end to provide accommodation for his rising family, determined to put a loft into his house. Things elsewhere apparently simple are not always so in this island. In the particular case I am speaking of the roof was so low it would not take a loft. It would first have to be raised, and to this undertaking neither the strength of the walls nor the man's means was sufficient. In other parts of Ireland the difficulty might have meant resignation. In Kerry difficulties are romances filled with flowery inventions. The story is called "The Stretching of the Roof." It tells how this remarkable man, having first dug it up, let down two steps into the kitchen floor.

It was my case.

"If I cannot attach wings to Dinoclus," said I conversing within myself, "I will attach them to my feet. Is it not where Mercury had them? I will foot every furlong of the road to Fews." And though it may not seem any very notable resolve nevertheless, like the Kerryman and his loft, it was an affair both of brain and brawn, of the nimbleness of the one and the toughness of the other. It meant hours of watchfulness, the doubling of my mileage, a continual running to and fro like the virgins on the wall; for whatever Dinoclus may originally have thought about this journeying from place to place, he had made up his mind to put an end to it. I understand better now the responsibility of pointsmen. Let me lag behind

to watch where a rabbit had stolen out, ears cocked, to nibble the tender grass, let me turn a stone to study the activities beneath, let me crane my neck over where a vole plopped into the running stream, and certain as the contrariness of this world some hidden avenue, some lonen, cassey, rodden, boreen, or contraption in the shape of a road, lay within twenty yards of me; and down that contraption Dinoclus precipitated himself with the speed of a tinker's funeral.

"Will there be much difficulty," I had asked Miss Henry, "in getting him to go?"

"Your only difficulty," she said—and I thought as she spoke she looked across at Perch—"will be in stopping him"; and if she had been the Evangelist Mark she could not have come nearer to the truth.

Let it rest there. At a place where the road curvets, coming close to the Comeraghs, securing Dinoclus to a gate I got into the trap. I had still a loaf, a segment of cheese, and portion of my last half pint of sack. The sherry had cost me more than I care to mention, but it was a wine that had been blended at each stage of its growth by an academician of Bacchus; a wine that without prudence might easily disguise a man. To Dinoclus, despite his perversity, I gave an extra shake of corn. Altogether it was a sound meal. We sank a little under the weight of it, but we both relished it. And as I sat forward, inhaling a strong, whiffling pipe of rich Cordangan I forgot my chagrin. The world I felt was going comfortably for me. I mention these things because, through the experience we now ran into, they sustained us.

The fear that he might have overlooked any stray ears in his corn bag had only left Dinoclus. I had barely got him undone from the gate, turning his face for the road, when under a very Ajax of a Com-

mandant, a bunch of recruits (I judged them) swung down the road from the direction of Fews. They were marching in columns-of-lumps, singing as they came. I remember feeling regret they had no band with them.

No band with them! no military band: noise that kills something besides time and reputations. You can lay aside the hundred confounding devices of science and suffer nothing save serenity; but you cannot lay off military music without famine of the soul. A thousand bards would lean forward in their seats had I the gift to tell its exaltation. Miles have I walked—and look upon those miles as the North Wind looks back upon the barred Gates of Winter—head erect, in London town (I am wide awake though drawing upon a distant memory) my place held stout behind those noble fellows, the drum-majors of their regiments, whom God preserve and leave them long their manly strength! The music of machinery! The hum of the Grand Preceptory of Trade! The mumchance of the Psalmody of Production! can a man better express it than in the Southern way? "Musha, hould your sootherin'." Like the contending forces before the battle of Gabra I kneel down and kiss the sacred soil of Ireland before I say, that the unarticulated complement of the human soul is martial music. It is the side-drums, the fiery edge of his imaginings. No other trickery, or inspiration, of his art is fellow to it.

I write elsewhere of meditation, sunsets, the west wind. I contradict myself perhaps. "Very well, then, I contradict myself. I am large. I contain multitudes."

As the drumble of the gathering sounds draws near

mark the inclement countenances of those round about you—not the crushed, or insurgent, faces of those condemned to work for others, but the condemners—for the face of a centaur might be transfigured as the farandole debouches and deploys. Guns! unlimber them. The abracadabra is upon us. As the feet of the soldiers stress the magistral flourishes, trombones and cymbals banging and blazing, step-goosing and making such a noise with their tarantaras, caught up by the soul-shattering passion of the triumphant madness the heart is rent. The reckless glittering cadences of the clamorous brass have seized upon it. Borne away, half thirst of gory slaughter, of manly life, of white tents clustering, half —so strange are the humours of our carnal bodies— fear, you are swept up by the conquering surge of the unfathomable tumult; this midgets' dance upon the beam of life.

In the late European war the General Staff had no misconception of the part played by military music. In the fighting line behind the heavy artillery, a bee among the flowers of death, the bands of an empire rang the canon of that fearful sanctus. But if these boys had no band they sang in tune. Long after they passed I lingered, listening until the lilt of their voices was lost among the hills.

I read somewhere not long since—in the London correspondence of a Dublin paper, I think—how a few remaining thousands of London's myriads still retain in us a friendly interest. The writer was sure of his facts. What meaning he attached to them I do not know; but if my voice have strength to reach those "favoured few," I would tell them that amongst us also are still some who have loved a little their swart

old city; who cherish in the heart affection for the great country of which its stones are citadel; who remember only of her the settled order, the laced and purfled centuries of proud achievement for which she stands. It is agreed. But a man's nation is the glacis of his castle. It comes first. What liberty consists in may be debatable. Dickens and his biographer once walked half way from London to Brighton unconscious of distance, so engrossed had they become in merely one aspect of it. Some contend it flourishes in proportion to the absence of representative institutions. It may be so. There are modern instances. I cannot say. I am not Minister of anything except my causal body, "therefore on that head I will be silent." But whatever Liberty consists in, all admit it is the true god. The altars of the god are now being erected in this land. The Ministers who represent the god to us have been at pains to explain this. Well, one cannot expect to enjoy a god without paying for him. Dinoclus and I were now to pay for him.

The singing of these boys was not concerted: just the tuneful voices in song of lads for whom nature had done much, art nothing. On they came until they were abreast of us. Then they filed past. When the back of the last was at length before me I looked at Dinoclus. How sorry we felt for each other the droop of his ears betokened. They lay back, finished.

"Poor Din," said I, "what have they done to you on me?"

His face might have caused an owl to weep.

"Cheer up," I said. "You must cheer up. We must cheer ourselves up. A regiment of vivandieres

might be hard set to hold their own with them lads. We must not expect too much. The timber is sound. Wait until the schoolmaster has had a chance to put two or three generations of polish upon himself. Then you will see the veining of the wood come out. Look down after them. The material is there, all wool and a yard wide, of veterans."

Prejudice? Like Dr. Samuel Johnson in his "Meditations" I have put off pride. It is unprofitable. But I am prepared to admit prejudice. Are not the Irish Huzzars of Death? Have they not proved it on how many fields? Has it not been said a thousand times? And if no one had said it, Callimachus might have been proud of these striplings. Marching to attention they might put the Bersagliere to the pins of their collars. They could not do otherwise; for if that salamander-eyed Marshal Saxe of a brigadier-general, or whatever he was, could not be counted on to march them who could? He would march anything, from Dinoclus to an elephant. I studied his face as well as I could coming towards us. It was the face of one familiar with danger, when high resolve alone is comrade of the soul, of a patriot-soldier; by which I mean an individual who feels oceans stirring and preparing unprecedented waves within him; a man aloof, as if he lived in another planet, from the people in whose interests he has decided it to be his business in life to fight. I was glad I had seen him. I might not select him as one with whom to engage in single combat. He had the eye of a kestrel. But if he had, was he not in his right place? Perhaps his name was Decies. At any rate we were in the heart of Decies. Who ended the military dictatorship of the Fianna if not the

Decies? If he were not a Brigadier-General Decies! he was at least a Brigadier-General in Decies. You may not believe over much in human nature; but you would believe in this soldier had you seen him.

When intervening time has laid a little the dust of the uprising 1916-21, when it can be written of with detachment (for one cannot ring the bell and walk in the procession), it will add a notable chapter to spiritual history.* I speak of the ideals only of its resistance. History compels a distinction to be drawn, not necessarily in disparagement, between the men who win the freedom of a country and its government which follows. The struggle was marred by savagery on both sides; but was the war of the Puritans of the Cevennes different? The war of the Camisards had its origin in the policy of the Quatorzieme for French "Unification." There was a lofty ideal behind that policy. But the chivalry of England, of Europe, did not thrill to the statecraft of the king, but to the streaming defiance of one of the most romantic episodes in history. Why not? New England, Marathon, or the Cevennes, it is the leven matters. War is glorified, not in the triumph of arms, but in the higher combined-interests of the individual and People.

As I said I looked at Dinoclus. We had gone down like ripe corn. Mockery is not a pleasant thing. It makes the puzzle of ourselves more perplexing. It makes—but such considerations are trodden out. What matters it about the mockery? I relighted my pipe, which had gone out. After all, these youths, what part had they with a jaded,

* General Beaslai's "Life of Collins" (1926), though almost a child of conflict, is a remarkable achievement; balanced, free from turbulence.

gampoge civilisation, with anything but the renewing omnipotence of nature.

Sons of the Morning! long after they had passed I lingered listening until their voices, like streamers of the dawn, had—for me—lost themselves within the neurones of Eternity.

THE CUP OF HEALING

If in my search for the soul of Ireland I seem sometimes to overglaze my ware, my explanation is that the materials in which I work vary. As in the potter's art there are hard, and natural soft, and artificial porcelains, so in Ireland. I will come in time to the porcelain of labour, much alumina and felspar in it, but the glaze is brilliant. Lycurgus dabbled in this ware. There is the ware, too, made by trade; but it is not porcelain. Those who have fear in the heart, because the dawn after the tempestuous night is dark, lest that which the sword could not kill the great-getters may steal, fear unnecessarily. It does not follow because a stone is hard that it will *weather* well in Ireland. And there is another ware! older than china, deep-softness in it, known by the dynasty in whose service it is used. Men from abroad with knowledge declare that it will fall out of favour; neo-Gaelic they call it. I do not profess to know. The people are Master. One of the mysteries of this island is that you seldom hear the Master's voice. A silent man, he works in the soil.

Concerning Fews and its forest, to which I had now come, I find the following entry:—

"Crossed the headwaters of the Mahon. Confirm the Rev. Power, but would expand him; for if Fews be part

of the ancient forest of Decies its glory like the gates of Thebes is gone. There is not as much left of its Brehon orders as would put a handle in a fack. That iron-smelting business of Charles the Second must have done for it. But unneedful to go back to the 17th century. We have Irishmen to-day, thieves of the forest, who should be branded by having their ears shaved off, so immense the enormity of their crime against country.

"Introduced by Donald Power to his grand-daughter. Her father, mother, and brothers were taking the salt water with some relatives, leaving her to see to her grandsire's comfort. Have I any adjectives golden, any verbs glowing, enough to describe her? Ranee of the Comeraghs, *con mas gran sosiego,* I salute thee! Lucky man of thy race, whom those questioning eyes will take into that nook, for love and self-examination made, thou callest thy heart.

"It was a great night. Feet to the Northern Cross, I called out the stars, naming them by their noble names, Mizar, Formalhaut, Vega, Aldeberan, until I slept. But does it matter at all by what names men call them? No one knows the stars who has not slept, as the Spaniards say, *en el mason de la estella.*"

When I first got the notion of coming out to see if the Ireland I had heard about still existed, my adventure was to be sprinkled nightly with the stars. Then the idea of telling a part of the truth about the things I discovered took shape. My journal became exigent. Continuously I was called upon to hold symposia of those difficult individuals, my conscious, bi-conscious and unconscious reflexes, until between one excuse or another I actually slept in the open fields some six nights altogether; and from these, Fews might have been deducted only for Donald Power.

His responsibility arose this way.

In a vain moment I had shown him my sleeping sack, an arrangement made out of a length of rubber-proofed canvas and the fleeces of two or three old

British warms. Upsome of my invention I spoke with some warmth, drawing his attention to the devices I called wind-straps. He took it in his hands, turning it inside out, drawing it up on his body, operating the straps. Then divesting himself, he held it from him in dignified admiration. I was inordinately flattered. Scores of times, he told me, he had slept with the stars when he was a young man.

"My brother, God be merciful to him, was a holy terror after the wild duck," he explained. "Were the heat in me I once thought would burn my body, they'd be two of us abroad to-night."

After that, if I were in the Polar circle, there was nothing else to be done but what I did.

Donald Power had shrunken a little, but he was still, despite this settling of the bones, a fine figure of a man. When I recall him with his full, untrimmed beard, it makes me wonder why men have made themselves beardless. Fortunately, a few noble men here and there are still left to us. The first reapers of beards added medicine to their trade. I merely record the fact. The early fathers, Lactantius, Clement of Alexandria, Paul, if Paul were one of the fathers, were all eloquent in praise of this feature. "Nature," says St. Clement, "adorned man like a lion with a beard as a mark of strength and power." But writing of Ireland one must confine oneself more particularly to it. A fine degree of elegance and sentiment was associated with the care both of beard and hair in ancient Ireland. The full beard was only permitted to be worn by nobles and warriors : men bound by the laws of honour always to be ready in the succour of distress, never to retreat in battle, without blush of shame in hospitality. Describing the soldiers of king Donall on their march to Moyrath,

the annalist tells us how "their great beards reached to their navels." The description fits Donald Power, as he first appeared to me coming down the lonen from his house, as I last remember him, a root of Jesse, waving me God-speed on the Portlaw road. He had turned four-score he told me. I wonder what Froissart would have made out of him finding him in this island. Froissart was never inside Ireland; but while sojourning at the court of the king of England he fell in with a gentleman called Castide. The Irish trouble was then acute. The country was just emerging from one of its periodic epidemics of reconstruction. Castide was fresh from it, and as it also happened had been fostered there. He was in a position to speak with some authority. Froissart induces him to speak with freedom and authority. Then his facts down, the great Chronicler proceeds to set them forth, in that remote curiously healing style which the years have not broken. The reading of Froissart is like the raising of sunken treasure.

It is a long time ago. Charles VI, debonair and in the flower of youth, was king of France. Richard II reigned in England. The pope was at Avignon. But in one sense the world was much the same: the old feudalism was not giving any greater satisfaction than the new. For the moment the organisation of its intellectual police had broken down. The commonalty under Jack Straw and Tyler were invading London. Straw was probably in the neighbourhood of Hampstead, but Tyler had pushed into the city. The king, with the advice of his nobles, was inviting him to retire to that "handsome meadow, Mile-End," where he proposed to grant his reasonable demands, or at least to shoe words as fair as anything Tyler could turn out for horses. Perhaps fixing the period

in this way will put us more at our ease with Castide.

"To tell you the truth, Sir John," says Castide, "Ireland is one of the worst countries to make war in or to conquer."

There is Castide's charm. Candour. He knew the Irish intimately, knew they reckoned centuries as a banker reckons days of grace, breathing time for combat. No record comes down to us of any large post-dinner advice he had to offer them. He never talks about what genial fellows he and his wife discovered them. And whatever he thought might ultimately be done about their country, hard work and unification were not part of his programme. The Irish were enemies to be beaten, if they could be beaten. He did not understand why there should be any heat about it. On the contrary, a people who had spent the years breaking in each other's skulls with a fine impartiality should be indebted to his countrymen for introducing variety into their pursuit of arms. The English were busy with France: they might easily have left the Irish chiefs to hammer each other to a finality. There was a very delicate chivalry about Castide. He was conscious also of being engaged with the one most experienced exponent of chivalry in Christendom. It behoved him to mind his points. Froissart looked behind words.

"Whenever the Irish please," he continues, "they desert the towns, taking cover in their mountains and forests." Fews would have been one of these forests. "Then when a favourable opportunity arises to attack their enemies to advantage" (which, as he naïvely remarks, frequently happens) "they failed not to seize it . . . and so light are they of foot no man-at-arms, be he ever so well-mounted, can overtake them. And sometimes they leap from the ground

behind the horseman and—for they are very strong in the arms—embrace the rider so tightly that they can no way get rid of them."

He stops. There is an interval while Sir Froissart is getting all this down.

Castide reminds one in a way of a great baleine. Sir Froissart is sitting over from him at the other side of the table. Having sent up a glittering column of vapour high into the air Castide inhales: then dives again down deep into his mind. The knight, quill suspended, waits upon the next rise. He has got the point correctly about the strong arms. Presently Castide reappears. This time he leans across the table as in these days you may see one man so lean towards another over a friendly pipe.

"Has Sir Froissart any inkling what they do with their prisoners?"

Sir Froissart has no inkling.

Then Castide will tell him.

And Sir John, a holy priest—and canon into the bargain—is so busy taking in this fresh grist for his mill he has no time to be surprised: "how they cut out the hearts of their enemies and eat them as the most delicious morsels"; which they no doubt would be.

But Castide was not a bit bitter about the hearts. After all, if their enemies were healthy men and the killing justified by ecclesiastical law, the Rector of Coolbanagher himself would find difficulty in putting his finger on where they had transgressed. This eating of hearts has it not passed into current speech? May it not in fact have been on the part of our ancestors a delicate compliment to the valour of their owners? On principle there are enemies of mine

whose hearts a famine would not induce me—even to grill.

What does Montaigne say?

"I think there is more barbarism in eating men alive than to feed upon them being dead; to mangle by torture a body full of lively sense than to roast and eat him after he is dead."

It may or may not be true that the Irish are among the most reactionary of peoples; that the world would be well rid of them; that since remote times they have not, as a nation, been en rapport with a single world-influence outside slaughter, cattle, and the Roman Church. What interests about Castide is that he states his opinions with such a winning honesty, and is prepared to laugh like anything at the fun of it.

As Froissart says we will now leave history for a short time and speak of Donald Power.

To understand him I find it necessary to go back upon the overtone of religion; but let us be cheerful about it. Religion, if you approach it rightly, is like a sunny day in spring: it has a fine earthy savour.

Have you ever noticed the love of man for identification discs? All his civilisation has never enabled him to break away from this primitive instinct. Sometimes they are more, sometimes less, inevitable; but if Italy be the cradle of the renaissance, France the sword of chivalry, England the loom of empire, Ireland is the furnace of religion.

"Let your faith be as a lamp guiding the pathway of your feet," says the Prophet. In Ireland whatever about faith, there is no doubt about the lamp. We have a lamp on each foot. The religious colour of the glass varies, but the lamp is always there, always the same lamps on the one man. This quality in our religion marks us with broad streaks like the

zebra, very distinctive. Zebras are handsome animals, and I do not at all agree that their appropriate place is a menagerie. My mother's people are buried in the little episcopal churchyard of a Northern village. It is all so long ago I cannot tell how it came about; but among their own people—they belonged to the infallible Presbyterian Church—the fact ruined them. In Ireland, in the absence of other qualifications, a reputation for sanctity may gain you honour even among your co-religionists; but let there be any dalliance with other gods and "you will see no more carriage company." Everywhere the lights and shades of this great national religious picture are in the same chiaroscuro, only hung in certain lights the oscuro is deepened.

Bear these things in mind, gracious reader, so that what I have to say of Donald Power may not elude you.

"It isn't like as if we were racehorses," he said to me; "there will be room and plenty for all to sit down if we get in. Is there no friendship of the road? What sense is there to travelling it with faces that wouldn't fit into a churn, our minds wrapped in the heavy friezes of our own persuasions?"

"Because the conditions imposed by the Medes and Persians enjoin it," I answered him.

I had been unable to resist the temptation. Then in vexation I could have bitten my tongue. This man with his queer slow distant charm, who could do efficiently the things that count, was hurt. He was taken aback not recognising the counter I had passed for coin.

"I am afraid I am indifferently entitled to discuss religion," I resumed hastily, "but may not a man find in solitude what he loses in company? I will

put my thought this way. Glycerine, which some people used to eat once as honey, disappears in the nitric acid your druggist sells you over in Dungarvan or in Waterford; but drop the stuff into a vessel of water and oily drops appear." He was listening with almost uncanny attention. I paused and braced myself. "Those drops are the deadly explosive nitroglycerine," I said, driving a dull throb into my voice. "Drop religion into the tongues of men and forms take shape that play the havoc of a Mills bomb with faith. You have the teaching of à Kempis. He would fit 'domes of silence' to religion. 'It is commendable in a religious person,' he says, 'seldom to go abroad'; meaning, as you yourself put it, that he should keep the heavy frieze of his persuasion wrapped well about him."

"You misunderstand me," he replied. "We live near the mountains. When the shadows begin to climb from the valley a man has to be thinking of the road. There is the friendship of the road."

Dignity, faith, friendship, his thought vibrated them. His voice held anxiety as of one who might unthinkingly have said something amiss; but his thought was like the rainbow of the waterfall, steadfast. "O Walt Whitman," said I, "Walt Whitman! here is the comrade of the open road that you were surely searching for, holding you by the hand. 'No politics, song, religion, behaviour, or what not, is of account unless it compare with the amplitude of the earth; unless it plants companionship along all the rivers of the earth, and along the shores of the lakes, and all over the prairies, unless it makes inseparable cities with their arms about each other's necks, by the love of comrade.' Here is the 'comrade close, of firm holding,' who understands you."

He took up the discourse again.

"We have queer notions, sir," he continued, "us who live under the shadow of the great mountains. We think long thoughts, and long thoughts are most old thoughts. You know what our forebears believed about the four Lords of Life, knowledge, labour, love, and the strength that gives endurance. Riders of the Sidhe they called them. If I had my little grandson here I would have him to tell you. He would tell it fresher than me. There would be fire in it. But their rule was law once in Ireland, before St. Patrick came. Four there were of them, each bearing his token of power. The Hazel of Knowledge. The Glaive of Light: that was the sword of the will that looks the future in the forehead. The third carried the Cup of Healing; that eases the heart, of friendship. The fourth, the Stone of Endurance. There isn't any choice between them; they are too big; but if I had to make a choice and could have but one, which God forbid! it would be the Cup of Friendship. The friendship of the Road."

Perhaps I extend the lesson of his experience too far; but it seemed to me, "clearing his path endlessly" that he might even bury us all together in the one graveyard. Well—for I must speak the unpleasant fact sometime—the arrangement would help to put a Christian appearance on some graveyards, make them less like refuse pits.

Donald Power was 80. When a man comes to 80 he is hard on the tide. From his discourse it was clear that he was feeling every day more strongly the need for conversing about that far country, where the flood reaches after the ebb. The eagerness of the climber was upon him to know what he would find, what others expected to find, what their notions were,

of the land which lay beyond its last steep aiguilles. Rejoicing in his honest gains, in the band of his jerry hat was the pin-feather, of an eagle I thought. Did it explain—this gesture of the mountaineer—why he champed at the bit which restrained him from comparing alpen-horns, contrasting alpen-stocks, with the brave fellows he told me about, Mr. Langley beyond at the Lodge and the rest of them, struggling near-by up the same steep acclivity? Donald Power talked at a foot pace; but his speech was so filled with quaint arguments, he was so much at home with the earth, there was about him such a sweet companionship, time sped in his company. Yet the steeple and belfry of all his speech was religion. "An old coat is an old friend," says Colonel Newcome. There is a feeling of friendliness about the old religions, a cheeriness in conversing about their animosities that was missing in Donald Power; but the strangeness of his new doctrine made up for it. I believe he thought himself that he had discovered it.

When the Angel showed Abou Ben Adhem the names of those who loved the Lord, "And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so," replied the Angel. Abou spoke more low, but still cheerily. "Just write me then," he said, "as one who loves his fellow-men." . . . And when the Angel, returning next night with a great waking light, showed the old pedlar the names of those "whom love of God had blessed, lo! Ben Adhem's name was first."

"If a man ask a neighbour to his house," Power ended, "it should not concern him to meddle, except in the way of feeling, what care he may have left at home, so long as he comes and has his friendship with him. I am only an unlettered man, but where you cannot open the heart there is deceit. The

spoken word is not honest. It is honest only to be respectfully silent."

There I leave him. In the heat of the day, rejoicing as a strong man he had run his race, helping everybody, his neighbour. So intense had the clarity of his mind become that the deceit was obscured from him, of a world wherein (thankful for them) we clutch at partial-truths, half-friendships.

Where you cannot open the heart, he said, there is deceit.

"What is Deceit?" says carping Justice, wagging his head upon his Bench . . . and the arrow of the preterit piercing him hastens on with platitudes, old when the Great Pan died.

Donald Power pressed me to defer my ascent of the mountains to the next following day.

"Friday," he said, "was a cross day. There was no luck in it."

But already my time had been outstayed. While the birds slept I was afoot.

AT THE GATE OF THE HIGHLANDS

OPENING my journal at the ascent of the Comeraghs I was confronted by the problem how to treat these mountains; what colours to put in, which to leave out. The sound of the "Last Trumpet," upon that fatal 7th September, 1653, was in my ear. Would I continue to carry on just touching the root gently against the axe? I took up the wise sayings of that great man, Muirchertal Mil.

"It is easier to fan its flames than to quench smoking flax."

"It is not given to every man to lift people out of their contented habits."

"He is well-born that is sweet-voiced in story-telling."

"Three things are esteemed in Ireland: a woman that is strong in child-bearing. A kerne that can fix renown to his spear. A judge that puts a curb on the red tongue in his mouth."

And then my eye lighted upon this. "There is honour for him that, fitting ribs on truth, gives it strength to put silence upon Deceit." I turned to Ryland—who still bears us good company—and stunned by what he had to say about these mountains of the cooms (or hollows) of the converging glens, this chapter came to birth.

Ryland though he remained in simple orders was unusually gifted.

There is in the Silva Gaedelica translation a tale of one Fergus Mac Leda, and of the people of Faylinn, which brings out what I want to emphasize. The Faylinns, or Phelans, were one of these diminutive races who at different periods have flourished in different parts of the earth. By all accounts they were a sociable people, observing all the conventions of more fully grown men, but with something of the pomp of La Fontaine. They were of engaging form, famous for valour, and of such natural strength of body that in the great Myrtle Book of the Two Swans it is told of one of their champions, Gogour, how having refreshed his body in the sacred river of their capital city, Dulbindo, in sight of the assembled throng in the stadium, with one blow of his axe he felled a thistle of enormous and foreign growth which had long obstructed the view of the arena games. But the most wonderful thing of all others about this people was their Constitution. Everything was done by it. Even the length and breadth and height, and softness, of their beds were regulated by this marvellous ingenuity of the intellect; for they were essentially a people who "saw life whole."

All this was as it should be, and they might never have tasted of the herb, adversity, if they had not been given up in the spirit and in the flesh to one wicked sin, boastfulness. No wall was ever around pride that could stand. This boastfulness spoiled everything, and in the end landed them in serious trouble. It came about in the following manner.

The Faylinns, or Phelans, had for neighbours a race designed upon a large scale, whose territory was known by the name of Ultonia, or Ulad. Distant in

manner, haughty, their hands closed over the live coals of a burning faith, they had nothing in common with the Phelans. Some intercourse, by way of barter, was maintained across the frontiers between the dealing-men of either nation; but the two peoples mutually despised each other. There was nothing unusual in this if it had rested there; if the Phelans could have curbed their unruly tongues. This unfortunately they were unable to do. With their keen wits they were continually making laughter among themselves at the expense of their ungainly neighbours.

"Look at the angularity of their faces," mocked one; "they are of the race of those who cannot laugh in captivity."

"Why do they not mix?" asked another.

A third filled the opening thus intentionally given: "For men with torpid manners there is no place like home."

At which sally there was unseemly and uproarious merriment.

Now in those days the people of this northern kingdom were pagans, but pagan or Christian they had always been in their own eyes of more value than many sparrows. Besides, individual or nation, there comes a time when the limit of thole passes. When the Ultonians heard the things the Phelans were saying about them there was great running of the chief men together. Their treaties of offence and defence were implemented. Very powerful orations were made. A scunner ran across the whole land.

"We will put the laugh," they said, "on the other side of some faces."

The fat was now in the fire; for when those things called by scientific men neurones become excited, the

law of the heterogony of purpose may put its toe in its brogue. A rising-out was decided. The god of the Ultonians, whose name might not be spoken, was appointed Commander-in-Absentia of their armies. The great slogan resounded, "Go to it, Baby"; and that day it was not the trouble of one house, but a song of grief was made that was heard over the whole land of Faylinn. There was to be no more rest for that wee people in their Constitutional beds.

Events now crowd thickly. The forces of Ulad, already mustered, burst through the pill-boxes that had hastily been constructed by the Faylinns along their frontiers. The great stockbrokers, bankers, and company rotators of Dulbindo fled in haste to the mountains. Despite its valour, a swathe was mowed through the ranks of the Lilliputian army. The capital collapsed. It was a revanche sevendable and complete. The free initiative and individual impulses of the people of Adam passed under the control of Ultonian administrators. The king and his consort were carried off into captivity, borne it is said—but this may only have been Ultonian propaganda—upon the palm of Fergus Mac Leda's right hand; and the sun went down and all was quiet. It is a tale told with all the vowelled richness and resource of imagery of the wrinkled story-tellers of the Gael.

But the Faylinns had long memories! And good goods—do we not know that they are put up in small parcels—does not Aesop prove that diminutiveness may sometimes score useful points? In this case it saved the life of the royal couple, provided the king with experiences among the ladies of Ulad we will say no more about, and in the end led to the restoration of their own gracious sovereigns to their distracted people. I have not rigidly adhered to the

text, but the saga has more than one interest, and its immediate bearing is this. Ryland reverses the whole mental process of the Phelans. He comes with his axe. The great strength is in his arm. The thistle is levelled. But, there is such deftness in his art, there is so much of address, of caprice, in how his work is done, that the forest of our childhood is down before we realise what has happened. We are staring across vacuity, yet there is no pain in the heart; only the sadness of the end of things. It is Ryland's finest gift, the charm of La Fontaine himself.

"Clay Slate," says Ryland, referring to the Comeraghs, "forms the base of all this mountain range." He might be chalking the fact on a blackboard.

"Superimposed on this basic clay slate are argillaceous red sandstone and slatey conglomerate all tubular, but irregularly placed in vertical position."

What does this mean? It means for one thing that life is beset by limitations. It means also that these mountains are useless.

"Could you tell me," said Donald Power, "how it would be coming about there's no minerals to signify in our mountains?"

I could not explain.

He kept silence a moment. Then his eyes narrowed.

"Do you think it was how the Lord forgot them," he asked, answering his own enquiry, "or that it was not His will to put 'em in; that he wanted to have one place on the earth where the devil couldn't fasten his hob?"

It was a new viewpoint. Our mountains then according to Donald Power were a kind of chevaulx-de-bataille between sin and the soul of the nation, Mountains of No Temptation. Well "the goodness

can tell." No people can have the best of sin and salvation. When Christ came down the steps of the Praetorium either you were with the Roman soldiers or you were not. And if our mountains do not help the "intertwining reticulation of wealth" to the lover of nature at least they are triumphantly worthy of affection. "The senses are captivated," says Ryland of the Comeraghs, "by the sublime and romantic scenery which everywhere presents itself." And as he wrote of them, there they are to-day, static, serene, secure, living a sort of interstellar existence, yet always in subjunctive symbiosis with the people they watch over. Like Lord Cork of Faversham, the Comaraghs knew what they were about when they decided to settle down in Ireland. But are they so secure? That is the confounding question Ryland drives us to put ourselves.

Let us sit down by the roadside and debate it; for this insecurity goes to the root of all our pretensions. More. It affects not merely our future, it affects England. It affects the Roman church. It affects Belfast. Where a race have had but one adventure it were unreasonable to be captious about their references to it; but what preoccupation would there be in fighting *The Bounty* to the waterline, if there were only Belfast? They could not get away with so useless a polemiciad. The insecurity touches every one of us. It would be the death of Power of Bonmahon.

Ireland had grown up like a fair young cedar tree. She had bent before the storms. She possessed in years and storied history, what the United States of America possess in acres. It might be that the seals of the world were in her keeping. The ways of God are not the ways of Ah Sin. No sane man would have fetched a dozen tarry fishermen off the Sea of Tiberias

—a pretty doubtful lot on their early performance—and induce them to leave their wives and means of livelihood, in the belief they had been chosen to establish an empire high and fenced up to heaven. We progress, but we do not yet fully understand the protoplasmic strains and pressures upon God. Ireland, said I, abounds in mystery. Can any other explanation be offered why amazon-necked solid-limbed Irish girls—with brogues soft as their features are pleasant— should bob their hair and want to gyrate, eyes doped, around the statue of the god Tango. Even in the natural order Ireland confuses. Listen on a night of stillness. The sound may have (but I do not assert it has) the quality of those rocking stones out of which an Englishman could not get a budge; which can only be rocked if you are of the pure Gaelic blood. But on nights of intense stillness there is a sound, a vague, distant, repeated, scarcely detectable noise. You will hear it almost to a certainty on still, moon-white nights, if you take up a position anywhere upon some height over the valleys. It is the riffling of the slatey conglomerate and clay-slate.

I have tried to find some escape from Ryland's conclusions, but cannot. Geology has this country in a net, a vast invisible net of which—glory and praise to God—she may at any moment feel the mesh. If I were not writing seriously I might be tempted to sprinkle irrelevancy over this truth : about our halyards being slack, our fires damped down, our decks unholystoned; but my word to you it is no matter for irrelevancies, for levity. The submersion of Ireland! often spoken of in jest, almost stripped of significance by the tropes of anserine politicians. The land which Malachy apostrophised. . . .

Gone! in the very hour perhaps when the end of his Week-of-centuries was around the bend of the next headland. The magical silver-grey lights in which we saw our steadfastness. . . . Vanished! Our spirituality. . . . A blown horse! The laugh of the Saxon! . . . bitterest of all, galling as Cook's laugh of the malignants in London. I would not begrudge Ireland in a great cause—the salvation of Ah Sin, if it could be achieved that way—but you do not smile or speak with levity of Krakatoo. You would not smile or speak with levity if you could transport yourself to the subterranean terraces of Mauna Loa, and see the rivers of that unbelievable volcano sweep like the horses of the Apocalypse beneath the red-hot stalactites of its caverns, if you could watch the billows of that multitudinous ocean lick its barriers. That, however it originated, seems as you look down upon it real enough; a reality such as amerced those whom fate found within the area of greatest overturning moment when ruin descended on Messina. Ryland may send out only a *eclaireur* before the sally; but he speaks warningly. Listen to what he says.

"The prevailing rock of Ireland is carboniferous limestone." Carbon is a non-metallic element. In scientific classification the carboniferous is mixed up with the Devonian and Parmian systems; but if you want the plain truth about carboniferous limestone pour a bucket of water over two or three lumps of it. It is true we have the Giant's Causeway, sound basalt, and a few octahedral arrangements still going on up and down the country; but unless one accepts Donald Power's explanation, it is evident to any thoughtful student of the subject that nature has not

proceeded with her usual infinite delicacy in her mineralogical dealings with this island.

Ryland continues:

"This limestone save in the north-east corner of Ulster rests upon beds of slate." Slate serves as an excellent roofing; but there can be no two opinions about the man who lays his foundations of it. Apply the principle nationally. The tradition of disappointment has annealed our souls; but if you have a sigh left in your heart except for yourself, let it now be brought out. Ryland had the misfortune to live before the era of organic chemistry; but the conclusion upon which geologists are agreed, of which he reminds us, is not affected by our later knowledge. "This slate upon which Ireland rests *may give way* at any moment."

I will anticipate your objection about the support of the conglomerate. The support of the conglomerate is the support you rely upon from your friends when winter comes for you. Conglomerate may seem, may to the touch feel, hard, but what is it? Round or water-worn pebbles of pre-existent rocks, pudding-stone. Ask yourself what its nature suggests. If it suggests anything is it not that at the first disturbance of the limestone no reliance can be placed on it, outside the foundations upon which it in turn stands. And how does it stand?

Take the facts. James, that basket-hilt stale-juggler who planted the cuckoo in our nest, was a deeper rascal than you give him credit for.

"The conglomerate found in Ireland," says Ryland, "save in the area around Belfast, where it rests on *yellow grit*, is scattered about in disjointed slaty masses." There is no order, no security, no business method, no regular system about it. There is no

system of any kind to it. Follow up these investigations systematically and if you have an ounce of patriotism left, lynch the first engineer who suggests putting a pick into your country. He is only one degree less dangerous than the man from Chicago who proposed to unload another religion on to us. This island got on well without engineers these last few thousand years, or as well as circumstances permitted. Let him find bread and butter elsewhere. Go down the Cambrian Valleys and see how that land has been divorced from nature; how the mountains of it, torn from their roots, are now commencing to rock and sway about; the ruin that the engineer has made of it. These engineering gentlemen may be road-menders of good repute, strong to build bridges, fluid in their handling of rivers, but when you hear murmurs about the mineral development of this kingdom, watch them. Remember the warning of the Vicar of Bray about Scots and Welshmen. Study their names. If there is no *lowland* Scot or Cymric blood in them, they are probably, if the truth were known, secret agents of the Saxon. Your country is in what nautical men call "a slant of wind," able to steer her course but with nothing to spare. People wonder sometimes why the Irish are religious. An explanation is offered and a comparison drawn. The English, they say, exhaust time; we exhaust eternity. I do not accept the explanation. An Englishman might be religious if he were sitting on an earthquake, or Hercynian uplift!

My ascent of the Comeraghs will always be for me the tenth day of the Muharram. With each advancing rise the glory of the landscape deepened; beauty smiting you like the stroke of a sword. Then a last

step, and I was in the presence of Coomshingaun; issued through the gate of the Highlands, into a world remote from the plain below as if I had stepped across the frontiers of Si-Fan-China. For weeks I had been watching them: now at last I was going to touch with my own hands the mystery of them. Catching my hat, I tossed it up for very joy of the old land.

There are not many places with the same power to set the heart astir as this table-top with its lake of the unusual name, "The hollow of the ants," Coomshingaun. What did it mean? Did it mean simply what it expressed, what the learned author of "The Place Names of Decies" asserts, a thimbleful of mediocrity where stars hang within reach? In parts of England more rigorous than Decies the hazel is found at an elevation of 1,600 feet. It once abounded here. It was the sacred tree of the druids. Unless a man with a pot of paint had been employed to keep the meaning of the name freshened up on a sign as large as the lake it could not be plainer.

The druids have not escaped the common calamity of man. "There is not an undisputed fact to-day of all that race." But though cart-horses can plough up a garden of matchless loveliness, they cannot destroy the soil, for the soil, like all great things, lives slowly. Druidism—Irish druidism—was the soil from which sprang a system the life-bringing power of which remains unspent. Chief counsellors of State, intermediaries with the unseen, transfusers of healing, custodians of the arts, the path of enfoldment does not enshrine a busier faith than Irish druidism. Untaught, it raised scholarship and chivalry to a religion. Strong without but gentle within, for longer years than Christianity can yet boast, it was the pen-

nant floating from the bulkhead of this nation. The druids did not drive around in gospel-vans, but by my faith, if I were to be houselled at the altar in the morning, the practical system of life within their keeping—and which they evolved—must have had rare and austere virtue to sustain its continuing impulse; to force Christianity to become a sitting hen even upon its superstitions; to bind its ideals of perfection as with turgensen steel to the affections of that stern race, taller in firmness than Roman spears, whose inheritance is our birthright to evaluate or barter. The eye marks, the judgment approves, the imagination is captured, by Irish druidism. Its memory, though fainter to-day than ever before, still touches the mind like the reflections from afar of evening bells.

There is probably more raumaish talked in Ireland than in any other country. One hears continuously feeble bleatings about Irish and anti-Irish. Where the mind is filled with the knowledge and the heart saturated with love for the glory of the history and cultural civilisation of this old land, that mind and heart are Irish; and where these conditions are absent it matters very little by what name the owners of them are called or call themselves. There is a tight-fisted sanity about the Gael, or Erse, or Celt, or Neo-Celt, or whatever it gives pleasure and satisfaction to the light-tongued to call him; but his heart is a viola played on with a bow—his mind—which is bewitched. The lure of this island has passed into a proverb. Wherein is that lure? Is it in that assembly of brave endeavour which English gentlemen call the "Dale," or in the cool air drawing down the centuries, tempering as it passes across this little land the sogging heat of civilisation? Is it in our music with all its

sweetness of wood-wind? or in that pattern wrought into the woof of our thoughts by those pagan myths and steganographies, elusive as bees in jasmine? Or is it just that tight-fisted sanity and the contrariness of it all? Whatever it is, the makers of our books of scientific investigation have not added to it.

"It is not only useless but pernicious," says Dr. Joyce, "to indulge in conjecture where certainty is not attainable." But that argument would not have carried the world very far: besides conjecture is relative. What is conjecture to his customer is quiet certainty to the butcher. I have not any particular affection for ants. They are the enemy of the man who digs in a garden. Some tropical varieties can be particularly obnoxious. These facts I know. What is new to me is that ants ever lived—in a hollow. In that respect the ants of Coomshingaun are a genus to themselves; but perhaps I have belaboured the subject sufficiently. The sound-similarity of the Gaelic word for "white" with the termination of the diminutive commonly used for "ant"; that bond between a people and its priesthood, the light banter of the tongue commingling with affection of the heart —typical of Ireland, typical of Scotland—which is like town music advancing to meet its great men—a "poor scholar" might feel shamed to have missed the meaning of this place-name. Our ancestors had at any rate imagination, and a conceit worthy, in naming this romantic spot the hollow of the white ants: a twitting tribute to the flitting white-robed shadows who taught the religion of the many-sided dignity of earthly existence, who from their unresisting silences directed every emotion of those epic cycles, the melody of which—still—is like Dorian thunder upon the beach of history.

When a Chinese poet transmutes a thought into imperishable verse he does not hawk it in the market place. He makes his way instead to some scene of exquisite natural beauty and seating himself, becomes wrapped in contemplation before it, worshipping his genius. His action is natural. In that fruitful land he does not need to hawk his wares, the arts are protected. A man cannot start, for instance, as a maker of poetry in China as he might open a laundry. Formerly the same law prevailed here. There was no reason why you should not be a maker of chariot wheels, or lime-burner, or worker in metal, if you had useful hands; but poetry and bardic song touched the life of the nation. They might be practised only by those entitled to wear the anruth of silver, or golden ollave. It was not good in any event, in these latitudes, that men should be permitted indiscriminately to pierce the clouds with verse, or even with prose. The climate is sufficiently drab; and yet, inwards or outwards, struggle against it as one may, this table-top of the unusual name releases insurgent thought.

Inwards, standing on the brink of its lonely lake, its wall of guarding rock rising 1,100 feet above you, it might be the pagoda of the Five-Hundred-Genii, a place of edgeless forebodings. This morning, however, feeling was an enchanted honey-bee. The mind was a sundial, the only shadow it registered brightness. The woods of the druids were gone. What of them? There was ringing joy to the bare rock stripped to the bone. I seated myself beside the beck which carries the overflow from the lake, the whole volume of it scarce enough to turn a prayer-wheel. The rough going from Donald Power's house, the sharp climb, the fresh morning air, had aroused that beast with groping claws which is for ever driving

us along the road of inanity. Possibly the transmutation of this beast into a pleasant internal rock, or the influence of the hour and scene, or both combined, may account for it, but I had no idea I was so profound a thinker. If I were to reach the further lakes and still make Portlaw before dark it behoved me to be stirring. Instead, in the ripe ease of my body I sat on, toying with these mountains, with Coomshingaun, with the notion suggested by them of fitting the ribs of Truth to Ah Sin.

"Come on, you mad-cap company of inverted, many-caparisoned thoughts," cried I to myself, "tell me who the devil put those useless mountains here? What purpose of progress, comfort, equipoise, money, economics, brains, production, of still more rapid transport, do they serve?"

"What purpose," a gentleman said to me in Western Decies (I had been bearer to his house of a Golden Rose, of a very special message of felicitation), "what purpose of utility does Christianity serve, has it ever served, save as a check on the lower orders? As a rule of life it is not observed. Men do not joust with spear or lance for the lowest place; they do not divide their goods and give them to the poor." What purpose does the fakir serve who breeds upon his body vermin that his soul may gain the paradise? "Slatey conglomerate piled on clay slate!" Were these mountains then giant fungi? Had this God we worship no nous? Surely there must be some broad national plan, there must be coal, there must be fire of some kind or iron, something that the Business Christian could buy and sell in human souls within them; or was it possible that this God was just a pious, rather beautiful legend? A god of any standing, engaged in the wholesale way

with a business such as the manufacture of the universe, would know that, mountain or nation, its greatness is in its august belly.

The opening was favourable. What purpose, I asked myself, did anything on this earth to-day serve save to give volume to the pundits of Ah Sin, that gentleman with chin like a snow-plough, whom some dealer in paradox had called "A Business Christian." Decked in one knows not what divine apparelment the selvedge of the years had not been long enough for him to tear humanity. "I worship," says he, turning his eyes to Heaven, "one God. I have fig-leaved everything that can be fig-leaved. I have sand-bagged whatever required to be sand-bagged. There is no other God before me."

Yet what were the facts? He worshipped two gods. He grovelled in secret before a dual godhead; and there was never any other before or behind him. In age he prayed to one, a beautiful prayer (for himself) that his hidden unspeakableness being forgiven, he might be happy after death. In manhood he worshipped Anyei-Macha-Ponra, the god who gives peace and immunity in vice; abundant herds, good luck in ambush. Coomshingaun, said I, knows this Christian. She flings no *imbelle tellum* at him, but she draws her mantle about her lest its hem should touch him. Is not this lynn, this rivulet of sparkling water that she sends forth her bannerette? the symbol that neither she nor her brothers, these great mountains, will suffer him or the pioneers of him ever to dash like switch-engines about their fastnesses; that she will never be ticked off in kilowatts as your grocer ticks off his bags of sugar; that they will not collect their Death Duties to swell the corbona of that Christian.

I was travelling too fast. Shortening sail, I put before myself this simple issue. Did Ah Sin really steal man's inheritance, or were his accusers just hot men, their impeachment indiscriminate? He had notable vindicators, Burke, Wells, scores of the distinguished illustrious. No man who has written so variously as Herbert George Wells can be held accountable for all he postulates; but I fell back on him. "The system under which we have grown up," he says (meaning the system of Ah Sin), "is slipping rapidly down hill to collapse. This collapse means reverting to the peasant order. It means the death of transport, of industrial organisation, of town life"; and as he writes on (at the moment he is writing sociologically) you feel how he is shaken by the malevolence of the cataclysm. "Alas! alas!" says St. John, "that great city of Babylon, that mighty city. The merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man shall buy their merchandise any more." And the broken gods were cast into the River Gur, and they sank and were seen no more.

It may be so. In this land of enigma-makers, where the Red Hand of O'Neill, the symbol of a thousand years of chivalry, has sunk to be the overstamp of a company of common carriers, anything may sink. All things have their day and appointed passing, even the reminiscences of ancient ladies with sympathetic pasts. "All things," says Brantome, "do wear in the using only wantonness."

I turned to Burke. I turned to him with the greater confidence because, at the moment, scraps from his immortal speech on Conciliation were being hurled, with approving huzzahs, from the hustings everywhere.

"The body of the people," says Edmund Burke,

"must labour to obtain what by labour can be obtained, and when they find, as they commonly do, the success disproportionate to the endeavour, they must be taught their consolation in the final proportion of eternal justice."

Life gradually dulls the edge of excitement. Even the men who deny existence outside sensation in time become wearisome; but I confess this passage has always delighted me. Edmund Burke, brilliant, cool, detached, who pierced with thought and phrase into the disorderly impressions of his age, must have sifted, weighed, balanced every word of this remarkable pronouncement. It formed part of a notable utterance, upon a notable occasion. It was the considered definition of one competent and commissioned to define the ruling creed of Christendom. This then was the ultimate argument, where the bolt was bedded in the rock to which the chain is riveted; beyond which we cannot go. "The body of the people must labour to obtain what by labour can be obtained, and when they find the success disproportionate they must be taught their consolation in the final proportion of eternal justice." It would naturally not appear on the surface of economics, but Edmund Burke was dealing with permanence. I remembered as yesterday when I first lighted on it. At last, said I, I have dug something out of the brantub. In a flash the favourite rallying point of my thrice-venerated tutor—the low ebb of whose fortunes had clarified his faith—became plain to me as Dr. Moffat's Bible. "For the duty of the poor," he used to say, "is to be ever ready, at the first signal of danger, to fly to arms in defence of the good things which belong to the rich; and that is how the union betwixt citizens is maintained."

The passage of the great statesman went under the roots. It was not the apologia of Ah Sin: it was his apotheosis. The world which we know, which this gentleman invented, was a phenomenon—perhaps a necessary phenomenon, if one may be permitted so to put it—but in time, so dependent had humanity become upon its sap-swollen breasts, even its priests had come to believe in its divine origin. Then daring men arose—not the old-fashioned patriotic word-mixers, but humanitarians of a new order—questioning the faith; and here in one clear-cut sentence, was its vindication and their answer. The words were lifted on wings . . . and still . . . still I was not satisfied. I wanted to learn so many things. I wanted to be told how the religion took birth; about its days of early struggle; how its priesthood propagated it in the good earth; how they had fitted it to the human utensil like the cuticle, the thin fold of the scarf-skin that surrounds the finger, tear it out and the whole nail-rim is ravelled. I went over the words of the great teacher again; but added little to my stock. It was the Concordance of one who felt like an oppression the need of holding almost fiercely to the faith sustaining him. Conceding at once the case that the phenomenon rests on the unbalance of the plan of creation, it showed how that unbalance would be restored; how the commerce between the eternal and temporal is adjusted and, with proud sense of sacrifice to duty, with brief fitting ceremonial of phrase, the great orator, political thinker and statesman accepts on behalf of priesthood and faithful their Doom, in that last proportion of justice. A gentleman, he has played for high stakes: it takes blood to lose. A thoroughbred, he stays the distance to the finishing post. I pondered the whole thing. Sud-

denly a new light opened upon me. The gates of the great fairy kingdom rolled back. Not an outlander anywhere was to be seen. A mason, I was clasping behind fraternal doors the hands of masons. Stretching myself out at full length on the benignant earth I kicked my heels with delight.

> " For Puck had found a bucket and spade
> And lured from her mother a wee mermaid.
> In Pirate's Bay they joyfully dig
> A fort for Oberon gold and big.
> They sleep till cock-light, curled in a shell
> While a sea-buoy rings to them, Ding-Dong-Dell."

And quidnuncs pull the greyhound's tail because the golden age was long ago; because the world they say is outworn; because our days are broadcast, arrows without point. Of course there is that ever-present appalling nightmare of ever-bulging population; but let us refuse to think about *that*.

I now—but as a sort of mental exercise only—examined my Christian faithfully; but because where with modesty I can commend, I mean to commend,

> " And aiblens, when they winna stand the test
> Wink hard, and say the folks ha'e done their best."

Because I now suggest what may have occurred was that the phenomenon had outgrown him, I do not want it to appear I am moving my pieces for safety. This Christian who could be dangerously polite, who was impenetrable, aloof, detached, proud, orgulows, unflinching, everything that the Redeemer was not, may have been a peeper through blankets, bald, obese, glandulose, a man in constant need of powerful carminatives. Suppose it. Take glandulose. Dr. Louis Berman, M.D. (probably same as the Norman-Celtic, de Bermingham) Associate in Biological

Chemistry, Columbia University, tells us "That the chemical conditions of our being, including our internal secretions—man's chief gift to his children—are the steps of the ladder by which we will climb to those dizzy heights, where man will stretch out his hands and find himself GOD." I am not competent to pass on this astonishing destiny. It is not entirely new, for Epicurus considered certain secretions to be a portion of both soul and body. My point about it is that when the doctor, an American citizen, was working upon his great theme "Personality, the child of Glandular secretion," abundant little touches go to show that the fabricator of the phenomenon was present to his mind; that he was giving us the chemistry of that abundant citizen.

But glands, morals, obesity, everywhere I prodded him, everywhere he was resilient. Edmund Burke had said the last word. The nearest that we can get to truth to-day is that the phenomenon had outgrown belief. It had become a monster. All that could be done Ah Sin did with it. For years he had displayed a fine round-about common sense in keeping the governor working on it a while longer. He had sat on all the councils, lodges, boards, societies, which were the safety valves of it; upon all the mendicity institutes which served as the vents for its dangerous gases, which helped to obscure the black shame of it; that world we have loved so well, where woman was sold upon his streets, where only the poor bore the burden of honesty, the long aching endurance of frustration.

True, at times, when the tide of human wretchedness rose to some exceptional altitude, it might be that one was carried away, bitter against this amazing projector, depressed like exile; but come into the opulence

of his presence, observe him on their mutual day of rest, on his way to converse with his friend, God; look in at him where he sat upon the days of his labour, making prosperity, withdrawn, alone with Occasion, and you were uplifted as when one enters a cathedral for the first time. An impossible part had been forced on him. Admit that he had waded rum-soaked through human blood. Have not all great bunching emotions been sanctified in blood? Is the price of Liberty not the carnage of unyielding men? Was Salvation purchased on the Mount of Olives? These no doubt are Calvaries of a different order, but Ah Sin had quality. The arch of his foot may have fallen; there may have been about some of him a certain thickness of the tongue, a habit of holding the hands clasped before instead of behind the back—it is easy to find fault—but think of the atoms harlequinading through vicious-visaged molecules, the water flowing out of joyous taps, the vintages warming in shadowy worlds of wine, the shutters flashing in instantaneous cameras, the flaming dragons tearing through the lines of night, the argosies plimsol-laden upon the seven deeps, the fancies whirling from exultant Presses, the motors ticking as if gods in spate, the incense rising upon a billion altars from his golden thuribles—this fellow originated it. He set the brain of man tingling; he acted on its scalp like a divine shampoo. Think you that the chicane of those pestilent fellows, the TEIVOS, or the dull brain of the rustic who digs in the soil, could have done these things? With salvo of maindeck guns and other ordnance, and with arquebus fire, I salute him! And if within the gates of his pleasaunce, he lined the velvety folds of his rotundity with the capons and fruits of the luscious earth he had invented for him-

self, let us pull down the blinds . . . are we entitled to cast the first stone? Have we anything less inviting to put in his stead? It is only a lubber leaves all to God on the edge of a hurricane. My only quarrel with him was his plea that he called his invention "progress." In that sense he was the most astounding event of history. I am not writing his epitaph: I am only putting the ribs they call truth upon him. But if he passes. . . . Lord, how Coomshingaun will chuckle in her icy belly!

I set off into the heart of the Comeraghs in tearing spirits.

TEIGUE AND THE OLD FARMERS

You may slip down the Comeraghs and into the woods of Curraghmore in little over an hour of the clock; but my route lay by a longer way. Donald Power came with me a piece of the road saying "good-bye now," holding my hand, then coming on again for another bit, many times before we finally parted. Honest man! may the sheaf of his years long continue to swell. If the white manes of the steeds of Manaan Mac Lir were silver they could not build him a house wide enough to hold his nobility.

It was already late when by enquiry I found myself within measurable distance of Portlaw, the little village of the birthplace of Labras O'Fuartham, at the gates of Curraghmore. In Ireland there is a form of humour out of which we get great enjoyment. We open the dull metal of our poseurs with the hard-biting acid of our wit; then running into it the enamel of our imaginations, cool off in the rain-soft crucibles of our minds. There may be a broad similarity about the art, we are a backward people; but it is an unfailing source to us of innocent merriment. May I be permitted then to attempt, not this art, but an imitation of it; to suggest to our Minister of Originality, when he receives his portfolio, that turning his attention aside from rivers that it is only the mercy of God they do not run backwards; from coal, that would

burn the boilers out of Lord Besborough—the old rattle-trap on the West Ireland Railway—from the peat-fuel phantom, as if the atmosphere of this country were that of the valley of the tombs of Egypt, he will find power running to waste in the little streams of Ireland which, without injuring a minnow, would serve equally to simplify the arithmetic of the great American people by dividing the price of their oil in two.

This bundling gallop of my pent-up imagination was started by the sight of the Cloddagh—a rushing torrent capable of turning a 60 foot wheel—the mountain river which pours through this ruined hamlet; ruined, they say, its mills silent, its homes roofless . . . but the thing which now matters is that the housebreaker should sweep its desolation from sight. The continued presence of such a defeated enterprise gangrenes national life.

The sun had already set in a red ball of fire when, interrogating a countryman, "Portlaw," he said, "was no more than the crow of a cock, beyond the next fork of the road."

"A mile?" I ventured.

"It might be that."

"Two?"

He pulled his chin regarding me thoughtfully. "One or two, it wouldn't make any differ whatever I said." He pointed his finger. "It's there from you in the clash."

He was quite pleasant about it. I thanked him and giving Dinoclus a prod we stepped forward again.

The days like my little trip were closing in. The nights had turned chilly. I had made up my mind not to sleep afield again. With the failing light there

was an uneasiness upon me. Donald Power had not been encouraging about the inns of Portlaw. There is no use living in the clouds: as society is constituted a man with an ass does not receive the same consideration as a man with a limousine. Times come to each of us when the mind is all shapeless edges. The end of my holiday was near. Night and the hard road and the end of things, there is no pity in them.

I was plodding on in this unbalanced frame of mind, my nerves stropped by misgiving, when I came up with a cottage set back a perch or so from the road. A creeper with black shining berries was covering the front of it. The hedge was trim. Inside the hedge it was gravelled like a gentleman's place. I pulled up involuntarily. "The owner," thought I, "will be a man who hears whispers in the woods; whose voice will be like organs when played skilfully."

I got out of the trap and, having roped Dinoclus to one of the stone piers of the gate, stood listening. From the back of the house came the sound of an axe chopping wood. Now I had read, and believe it true, that the imaginative focus can give synthesis to all varieties of material. Just give a thought to the matter. "My faith," said I, the synthesis working instantly, "I am in luck." For if you reflect on it, a man does not usually proceed to chop wood until it has been reduced to sizable blocks. It is then ready to be enjoyed. Hostility to it has vanished. Only the less mentally developed hate those whom they bully or rob.

Fit to be cleaved, the woodman's hostility to the gross timber has vanished. It has taken on instead the thrill of the chase; for the end of the chase is murder and man in his heart is a murderer, held in leash only by fear—fear of the unknown—and by the

vile organisation he calls police. And the chase thrills because man loads the dice against his quarry.

Sometimes there is a temptation to hate man, the ectype of the pismire; for like the pismire (which above other animations puzzles him) the greatest enemy of man is man. But this temptation is no more than a passing mood. Man, the naked animal, half-faun half-god, is too absorbing a study to permit of proper hatred for his scheming tailored counterfeit.

The chase is called business, or sport, or war, according to circumstances; but whether the adversary be man or beast, or fowl, or fish of the sea, the thrill is there, the dice are always loaded, the end always murder; the mask, the smoke-screen of the attack, always virtue or its connotations. The great cats aflit in their unguarded solitudes know this and when they gain on him, what was man becomes the mangled mass, the ruins of the long desecrated temple where the soul in him—to which those cats would have given fitter sanctuary—once wept. Man never fights, except spectacularly, upon even terms: neither man nor the aggregations of him.

So my woodman! but a woodman is not quite the same. In him communion with the voiceless things which grow upon the soil has diminished evil. He is strokable. He has forgotten the acceptable sense of the living tree, the pattern it had painted on the sky for unknown years, its shade, its tunefulness in the long wind, its willingness to serve: the giant felled, lopped, wedged, split, sawed up, is just game; he stands up in his unashamed self-interest before its ruin; but there is no lust. And if as the logs grow, as the axe sinks through the yielding wood, as the rich grain divides with no more than teasing resistance, his spirits rise, it is merely because, uncon-

sciously, he is obeying one of the loathsome appetites of his being, he is killing something—if only dead wood.

Luck was with me. "If the art of inn-keeping is practised in Portlaw," said I, "I have stolen in, at the identical moment, on the one man to reveal the secret."

In the end he proved a pillar of light, but that was afterwards.

"There is no place in Portlaw to get a stop," he said, "worth a damn."

I know Power better now, for he was another Power. By occupation a farm labourer, dwelling alone in this green-clambered cottage with his wife and his dog Spot, he had so gallant a confidence, so honest-to-goodness a countenance, he was so full of agreeable graces, liking ran like a linkman in front of him. On a venture, "Perhaps," said I, "your wife would give shelter herself to a stranger?"

I saw at once that I had staggered him. If I had suggested that the three of us, and Spot, should migrate to the mountains that the canaries come from he might have been less surprised. But the upshot was one of those experiences which breaks off for us a flower of life.

After we became better acquainted, "We have no family to speak of," he explained, "except Spot." But there was plenty of time, he said, weren't they no more than summachauns, a pair of children, little better than on the knee themselves yet?

"There's some thick-skulled duffers," he confided to me the morning of my leave-taking, "that it's a puzzle to the devil how women is bothered with them; but when a man makes up his mind to be joining the world—I am not talking of those boobs on the look-out

for a young slip to break into their ways, but decent lads—when a decent lad is thinking of settling down, let him get hold of a woman in-step-with-him, and he's saddled a winner."

A profound doctor.

The eccentricity of my travelling around his county for amusement tickled him deliciously. He knew every rood of it into Dungarvan and a piece beyond. He had never before heard of anyone wanting to travel it except on business. A day's coursing, a day at the point-to-point, the local football events, the everlasting festival of nature—there was so much to enjoy going on around him that he had no understanding or sympathy with those who had to go abroad in search of life. It was inevitable that I should fall under a shadow with him. He did not allow me as he believed to perceive his thought, but now and again I caught him stealing a look at me. It was not so much the look one man may give at another who has regained his senses (whom he knows never had many), but at one he suspects might have attained at an early age all the wisdom God had fitted him to bear. But there was still more to him.

Teigue Power leads a sort of tripartite life. Spiritually he has churned it up in a most confounding way. He believes the world was made in six days each of twenty-four hours, and that God knows things about himself he sees no occasion for mentioning to you or me. In church he beats his breast at appointed times during service, not with the cultured beating of the Sadducee, but with rousing thumps. He believes and acts in the most natural way; yet he is the host of numbers of fairly doubtful bacilli. He did not dispute canon law but he played ninepins with it, apparently to his vast entertainment. It

seemed to me that he wanted to wed the Roman Church to the Moravian Brethren; to establish a kind of brotherhood in it with the laity. But it is not easy to give verbal completed form to the religion of a man whose soul treads on the tops of daisies.

Then material. Materially Teigue's life is one of robust content. There is a soft murmuring sound like faerie music, half wind, half melody, going on inside of him; only the half which is wind sometimes blows down things.

Thirdly his mental outfit. Looking across the half-door of his cottage at the blight of white civilisation, he had come to provide himself with a third personality. In public life, he informed me, he was a Johnsonian. What exactly this involves in the way of political faith I have still no idea. It is the misfortune of living among books. The experience of others will be different, but I have not found that "the elements of life and literature are indivisibly mingled in one another." If the faith as expounded by this young evangelist be not orthodox, it was quite simple.

"Who," said he, "the James Larkin put the land there?"

My answer did not satisfy him.

"It wasn't the old farmers anyway," he said.

"The farmer is only growing crops now as a public duty," I reminded him.

"I'll tell you what, Sir," he said, "there's a curse on this country; and it wasn't the Orangemen put it there, but bullocks; and the (I regret to admit he called the farmers out of their name) who fatten them. A crew of farmers," he said, "would sink a Battleship."

"The farmers own their land," I said. "You cannot make ends meet by tillage on some land."

" It's the opinion of the people," he answered me, " they could live out of ten acres and their intelligence anywhere they get them. The land is the peoples. No man has angelic right in it."

He was certain of it as the evolution of the great anthropoid.

Now this was a contention that I felt called on to combat. The farmers of Ireland, having organised themselves, may be proceeding from wrong premises in seeking to aid progress by militant economy, instead of achieving economy by militant progress; to arrive at national prosperity by achieving family weal, instead of arriving at individual weal by achieving national prosperity; in seeking to capture results attained by countries such as Denmark, by the appointment of perambulatory missions to take a holiday among these results abroad, instead of appointing intensive missions to study the psychic root-cause of failure at home.

The story of Denmark has perennial freshness, but it is not necessary to sail down the Cattegat to learn its lesson. The lesson is the old Platonic difference between " meanings " and " things "; the story one of how the nobles and people of that little great country bore themselves, when reeling from the blow delivered them, in 1864, by Germany; their land crushed by insupportable taxation, her fairest province torn from her bleeding torso. It is almost an epic tale. How Statesmen lived, sharing their homely fare, in the houses of the people, rousing them from their tragic engourdissement. How Churchmen, as with tongues of fire, made their temples sun-valve lights across the Vaterland. How Minstrels packing up their oratorios, hurled themselves into the cause, barnstorming, giving patriotic

concerts in every hamlet. How Poets took cudgel in hand and tramped the roads, reciting the imperishable deeds of foregone days. How noble and peasant, Danes all, placed hands and fortune at the disposition of the State. How the people clamoured for books and yet more books—books on art, on science, on crafts, on history, on husbandry—for, women and men, they were learning the one first principle of progress, that mind-culture (culture of the head, not of the toe) must accompany the effort for increased simplicity, friendliness, productivity, efficiency, if they were to carry their country forward to the goal they set themselves, and have achieved. Everywhere, the schoolmaster, builder, engineer, were abroad, teaching, helping the people, planning to put into operation that system (drawing its strength from psychic sources, pride of race, the subordination of personal interest to national greatness) the results of which to-day, speaking relatively, are the wonder of the world.

This was all true; but Teigue seemed then to me to be dabbling, down in a dungeon, with explosives, and already I was getting fond of him. The Scotic Gael (I speak of the long centuries) loved always the broad daylight and cold steel. Put what gloss you like upon them, explosives—a shooting in the dark or at uneven odds—are the weapons of degenerates. "So far as I can," said I, "consistent with hospitality, I must draw up Jeremiah with cords, I must take him up out of the dungeon."

"You are I presume a Catholic," I said.

"No presumption at all about it," he replied unexpectedly, "I am; but I have a cousin that is an atheist."

"Ha!" said I, "when did you say he came down from college?"

At that he laughed outright. But my point, a necessary one, had been gained.

"As a Catholic then," I said, "you know what the seventh commandment teaches. Would you undermine the fabric of society?"

"Are the old farmers part of that fabric?" he asked. He squared himself arranging his looks emphatically. "Much your society did for my father. Rear ten children any way it convenienced him on a shilling a day, and shut his jaw about it."

"But there were milk and things."

"There was; and the towers of the Workhouse if his health failed him. It's no thanks to the old farmers if things are a bit decenter now. That seventh commandment sickens me. I'd want cotton wool in my ears to deaden the clack of it. The labour was thieved, and the bread stolen out of the mouths of the poor and their children long enough, and, priest or parson, it was damn little I can tell you we ever heard about that commandment."

You might think he was excited: he was beaming at me like an orchard of wine-saps.

"The old farmers are in the soup," he chuckled.

I shook my head.

"These agricultural gentlemen," said I, "are difficult customers to deal with. I am afraid you omit the foundation from the soup. The law thinks otherwise."

"The law," he countered. "No country was ever heard of that was ruled by them horse-faces. The majority of the people is the law. We are the majority."

I muttered some auxiliary thing about confounding

populace and people. "The worker must receive the fair share of what his labour produces. He is entitled to be satisfied that it is employed on non-wasteful production. That will come in time. It is inevitable. But the methods of Russia mean ruin. You swop despotisms, and in the exchange lose your advantage in fighting the one whose tricks you know."

He leaped to his feet casting a shadow up the wall as long as a steeple.

"Of course," he exclaimed, "ruin! When the fellows that's robbed the earth gets the fright on them they are going to be handed the muck-rake, it is always ruin." He would have nothing to say to Russia. He knew nothing about it. "But divide the arable size of Ireland," he said, "by the working population, then divide it by the old farmers, and you'll find where the ruin comes in handy. That is the broad National plan that concerns us."

I questioned what provision he suggested for cows, for dairying, and discovered that he added tactics to his other accomplishments.

"They will deal with that from headquarters," he hesitated.

Just the same he had some scheme for the preservation of pasture lands which I did not quite follow.

"And Curraghmore," I said.

Curraghmore with its cool fragrance was pigeonholed. "I'd convert the house into a beet-factory," he said, "into a factory for home-made sugar, and split the land."

The timber would be reserved. State property, like the breweries, distributing stores, posts and telegraphs.

I was now to rub my eyes. He drew out from his

pocket a sheaf of typed sheets entitled " Programmes for Study Circles." They traced, he told me, the whole overlapping of the economic and political factors in Irish history.

" Read them," he said.

I read them and recalled the Twelve Pins. Well, all sunny days are alike to the bees. There would be plenty of victuals at least in Teigue's commonwealth; and whoever he played Tory on, he had a soft corner in his heart somewhere for the " quality "; for the days before—whatever it was—had mumbudgeted everything.

There was an occasional one, he said, that may have behaved a bit hotter than the church asks for; but, in the bunch, they were whole gentlemen.

It was not his fault if they had to move with the times. He would not allow any of them to leave the country. " If they go, they must be brought back," he said, " they are registered here. There is plenty of land to go round."

He took me out now, so to speak, to have a look around the new Ireland.

He had commenced at the top, at the old Viceregal and other Residencies in the Park. These he had converted into retreats for the wards of the nation; the aged and so forth who might never have married, or whose children were themselves settled down or dead.

" The apostles did not live in places like them," he said. " It's up to a decent nation to put the comforts of nature and life into the fists of the men and women who gave her the sweat of their bodies, when the strength was in them." I could not very well raise any objection to this.

Then labour. " We hear a lot these days from

the other fellow," he said, "about hard-work, about going what they call from strength to strength. But if hard work is to make us all rich, perhaps you'd riddle me the explanation why wages were less than one-third present rates when labour worked one-third longer hours?"

"You have turned the argument inside out," I replied. "In the world we now live in, which is the only world that concerns us, wages follow, or soon will have to follow production, not time standards. Whatever the time scale, the greater the production the higher the wages. The world markets set the pace. In well-managed factories and shops the employers fix no limit to the wages a man may earn. In farming, with improved standards and intensive culture, it should not be different."

"Look here, Sir," said he, "don't talk to me of them feller-me-lads and their production. One of 'em hooks you by the arm and says, 'Look in here. There are ten thousand machines right in there, turning out nails, saucepans, washers for pumps. Look at the rosy content basking around. But you wait, son. This 'ere factory is a bit o' sunshine; but it's only a toyshop. The guiks wot own the machinery that makes them machines have our orders. You pink in here again in ten years, when we 'ave multiplied them ten thousand by another, all a-running on blessed shifts, and you'll see the nearest thing to Jerusalem this side of the Jordan. There's a brass-fronted challenge up to God's people to do these things. Humanity wants happiness. It wants saucepans. It wants washers for pumps. It wants flivvers. We mass production and hand 'em out to humanity at over-head charges. How is it done, sonny? I'll tell you. Hard work. We are plain

business men. You give the hard work, and we hit the high spots. We pass you out a slab of wages like the stone front of a cathedral. Take our word for it. We're a-going to tidy up this trodden-out old earth; to put some balm for blooming humanity into her.' "

His eyes were like burnished saucepans as he beamed across at me. " You have been to the States then," I said.

" States and Scotland; England too," he answered. " But no more foreigners for me I say. Ireland is good enough Christian land for this child."

I gave up. What else could I do? Powdered with his special flavouring of Americanese, the whole rendered in broad Doric . . . he should be in the Senate. For the moment I felt with Agrippa; " Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

His State in short was a diatesseron of the recognised Perfection systems; but with two or three distinctive features. It was however in a gift of natural vision (I have grown in wisdom since those days with Father Hilarion), which had enabled him to turn down the equalitarian phantom of existence that his genius stood out. Labour was odious; but home and the sanctity of private property—within strictly prescribed limits—were cardinal points. Moreover his hostility to the farmer was not, I discovered, entirely class prejudice. He detested him: " That bloke," he said, " makes me blush with misery. Th'ignorance of him. The dam old cod "; but it was the support obtained from the farmer by the man whom labour must destroy that really aroused him.

" You favour anarchic feudalism then ? " I queried; for I wanted to check my thoughts by his.

" I don't understand that," he replied. " I am referring to the thing our leaders call the froth of

democracy. But we'll give them gall berries. Labour is wide awake."

From labour—the hired commodity—he had stripped the right and left bower of its everlasting humbug, dignity. He recognised the sale of manual toil as a necessary evil, a condition made inevitable by the necessities of the body; but it was monotonous, exhausting, ugly, the calamity of sin. The aim of Government should be to combat it. Living largely on wheaten and oatmeal foods, on fruit, eggs, butter, vegetables, he had scrapped stall-feds with luxury-production; and lo! out of the stricken thing, civilisation, a new earth had arisen.

"An uncle of mine in the gasworks in London sent me this," he said.

He handed me a book, translated from the Spanish, entitled "The Commonwealth of Intellect," by a priest of the diocese of Aguascallentes. "There's wood for your crutch there," he said, "when you know how to handle the grain of it."

It certainly poured out rebellious rhetoric, breaking across Ah Sin as the Atlantic breaks, when the weight of the west wind is on his back. I thought it wandered a bit; but Mexico is a big country. Teigue maintained that it was worth the mental effort; that he had leaned on it.

"It's a fine book," he said, "I wouldn't mind paying a shilling for it myself. There is a smell of the furze off it."

"Cactus," I felt inclined to correct.

But there was a smell of the gorse and "all manner of facetiousness" about Teigue himself.

"No holding must exceed the average of the Belgium tillers," he shouted at me, coming back to bedrock. The only strain would be on men like

Nobel of Africa. The law had barely pulled up short of the death penalty on any one convicted of criminal, or excessive, labour. Outside his own land, garden, or home, no one was permitted to work more than five hours. There was no need. With the elimination of non-essential production, with the prohibition of travel by mechanical agency, (except where men were engaged on the business of distribution, or under strict and intensely restricted government permit), the sinews of labour were relaxed. Cities it seemed—their bones melting away inside them with a sort of industrial patholysis—would slowly fall into desuetude, supplanted by a countryside of rural towns. Manual and brain workers—levite, leech and layman—all alike received a uniform wage of or in the neighbourhood of £4 a week, with increments according to family. All commenced and finished on the same pay; the increments dropping off as children attained maturity. Excluding the factory, shop, or homestead, and the home, and their respective equipments, private wealth over £500 passed to the State. The State provided free for education, healing, the higher amusements, building, religion, printing, the dissemination of news, and the burial of the dead.

"My faith," thought I, "Plato is re-discovered. There will be lamps burning before his shrine in every townland. We shall be wearing rosettes again upon our breeches."

At last wage-earning had been dethroned. Wages formed, as no doubt they should, the least portion of the workers' reward. The arts flourished. The people were opulent without vulgarity. The fibro-vascular tissue, to use Tookes's idiom, balanced the pulp of pastime. Every man in his way—and no joke about it—was a sort of Lorenzo de Medici. It

was a bold plan. Ah Sin is gone now surely, said I, and May God have mercy on his soul! for while he lived and remained in the world he was a very handsome knight. There would be no more hams boiled in Veuve Binet. There would be no more creamed potatoes. There would be leisure, but no more leisured isolation warming the five wits. It was finished . . . if the reserve of military force which supported the old Christmas tree—on which for so many centuries we had lighted candles—were once out of the way.

"You'll have us living in willow-pattern land," I said.

"Not exactly," he answered, "there will be no more eating the calf in the cow's belly in this country. There will be more than three of them Christy Minstrels entitled to be gliding over our bridges."

He saw it all before him, "th'important day, big with the fate of Cato and of Rome." His chief difficulty was to understand why others—the Beresfords perhaps—did not recognise its beauty.

"Give Mr. Davidson the 'Watchword of Labour' off the shelf, Bridget," he said.

His wife handed me the words of the song and without more ado we sent it "along on the breeze." The chorus swelled to our beating feet. Our soul's unformulated needs were in resurgence.

"The first drop of the broth is the hottest," he said. "If the devil is in it I have told the truth. The worker has had enough of mean, low ways of going on."

"You certainly have the numbers," I said.

"Numbers!" I wish it were possible to imprison the derision in his voice. "We're going to have the

votes counted in every polling booth at the close of the poll."

"Why?" I asked.

A broad smile descended from his forehead and overspread his face. Then he winked slowly, meticulously, as if his eye were closing for ever upon an eternal verity.

"Is it 'why' you are wanting to know?" he looked at me. "Mr. Davidson, Sir, you won't mind my saying it I hope. I don't mean offence; but you are an innocent gentleman. When that little affair of the ballot boxes is settled, we have the numbers right enough, there'll be nothing to hinder us. There's the Jew-boys of course hawking cheap pleasure. If you want to come Paddy over a man first dull the thinking part of him with cheap dancing. But we'll slacken their dart. We have their numbers. There's somebody going to get the lick of the rolling-pin . . . sure as the ticking of that clock"; and he pointed to the dinkiest of little wag-o'-the-walls. Then he stretched out his legs and laughed softly; no doubt at mental pictures the rendition of his philosophy called up.

Well, well, to every psychosis do not learned men tell us there is a corresponding neurosis? Admittedly the times were grave—the gravity of drift in face of the clearest warnings that the present order, the outcome with all its imperfections of the highest human wisdom, is being mined slowly, stealthily but not less certainly, menaced with utter destruction—but does the imminence of a cataclysm ever arrest psychophysical interactions? Were the Churches thronged during the great plague of London? Besides the fact is we have very little solid information about laughter. Doctors not being called on to deal with

it have not defined it. I just found myself moved by a succession of little impulses, involuntary, outside control. I call them little, but in reality they were imperious. No doubt I was already far gone in nonsense; yet, neither then nor since, can I explain further one step of the process by which I became now, all at once, physically deranged. Perhaps the reader is familiar with that passionate piece of prison literature, the "Jail Journal" of Mitchel. If so, it may help my halting explanation. Mitchel is giving an account of his and Martin's reunion with O'Doherty and Meagher (of Decies), out on the shores of Lake Sorel, Tasmania Island. The four friends had not met since their arrest and exile.

"In a minute," he writes, "Meagher and O'Doherty had thrown themselves from their horses, and as they exchanged greetings—I know not from what impulse, whether from buoyancy of heart or bizarre perversity of feeling—we all laughed until the woods rang around, laughed loud and long, and uproariously, till two teal rose, startled from the reeds on the lake shore, and flew screaming to seek a quieter neighbourhood."

That was laughter at its best, devoid of reason, incapable of analysis, jovian, crumpling up the body; laughter as the gods, tickled perhaps internally by their divine food and the world they had created, were said to laugh. All my efforts to repress the paroxysm failing, I let go restraint. The infection spread. I am not sure but Spot himself may have dropped a tear. All three, we laughed till the rafters rang, loud and long, and uproariously. Teigue slapped his thigh.

"It will be a quare one for the gaubeens," he said. "Something for them to think on of starry nights."

My eyes were filmed with mist. I supported myself on the chair and rocked with laughter.

"There will be no attorneys in tall hats at my funeral," he had said. No; but he will leave wealth overhead notwithstanding. It will be the funeral of a millionaire, of laughter.

THE GLAIVE OF LIGHT

FEW may disagree with Sir Anthony Hamilton that those who read for amusement are more worthy of attention than those who open a book merely to find fault. But are there others: "Some that by due steps aspire to lay their just hands on that golden key, that opes the palace of eternity"? To such I make profound obeisance.

Sometimes during the sojourn you must have seen two men suddenly halt as, with the tip of his outstretched finger, one touches the other upon the chest. It is done mayhap with exquisite discernment. The one who touches with the finger is quickening friendship, is making a point by the wayside. So for a last time I would make a point with you by the green-marged road; only whatever of grace you find lacking I ask you to believe that it is my art, not the currents of my heart, that is at fault.

In the great capital of our nation thousands of the distinguished among our countrymen bend to the task (and advice) of Government, while other thousands, still *in partibus*, stand ready, upon the summons of emergency, to take upon themselves that often-time thankless burden. Does anybody believe

these numbers need adding to? Is it too late yet for me to return and drop the enigma of Ireland into the inky depths of Coomshingaun? And if I did, would it sink? And sink or float is not truth strewn with wreckage; for truth, as the lady said of the Canticle of Canticles, is a difficult subject. Every reticulation of it baffles. And authors are—I did not say venal—sometimes unmindful "of the crown that Virtue gives to her true servants." "When an author," says the Reverend Vicesimus Knox, M.A., "stepping forth from the privacy of his study holds up his volume in the public eye, it is no violation of charity to impute the greater part of his motive to vanity."

Do I succeed in surrounding my little point with seriousness? It is not easy to be serious (outside affairs of business) and yet escape turgidity or extravagance. To-day—while I write this page—the sea is transliterating beryl and jade into riffling melody. It is spring, best beloved. The air is the breath of Phoebus. Under its stroking touch every leaf in the woods has become a voluptuary. What confusion and skaith are driving me to keep open this school of archery, this shooting of words at a target that is invisible?

Just this.

The Spirit of Ethell son of Conn, servant of none; the bard of Brian MacGuire.

Far removed indeed from him, away down under the shadow of the organ-loft by the western door, yet in amplitude of passion, in will to break down the narrow confines of daily life, holding the end of a candle in the same temple.

Saith Ethell:

> "I shall leave old Eire with a smile and a sigh.
> She will miss me not, as I missed my son,
> Yet for her and her praise were my best deeds done.
> I worshipped Truth: I bewail my sins.
> The men that were wicked to me and mine
> (Not quenching a wrong, nor in war nor wine)
> I forgive and absolve them all, *save three,*
> May God in His mercy be kind to me."

There can be no turning back. Under the arches of the years, down labyrinthine ways, up vistaed hopes, the Glaive of the Sidhe rides on.

Parting at last from Teigue and his wife, I had but laid my head on the pillow when I was asleep. Next morning, early astir, I stood up ready for a whole day in Curraghmore.

Curraghmore ranks amongst the seven great pleasaunces of Ireland, Carton, Coolattin, Derreen, Powerscourt, Tullymore, and the Manor of Adare.

"Has it been always as wonderful as this?" I said to an impassive giant I met in the forest, the chief verderer possibly.

"When the wolfdog roamed this country," he answered me, "it was the home of woods."

"But the scenic effects?"

"A vista has been straightened out" (his mouth was uncompromising), "one here and there, richened. The beauty is in the land."

I began to have misgivings. There was a brute strength, a ferocity, about him that in some way we have come to associate with revolution. No doubt he spoke as if he might have belonged here; but there would be shamrocks growing about in sheltered places that, if my doubts had justification, might

account equally for his air of part-proprietorship. I have never rightly understood the Republican theory of land tenures.

Within the gates alone of Curraghmore, under its attires of St. Hubert—that old ascetic of Maestricht—are said to be upwards of 3,000 acres, and almost as many without. I regretted having come across those two-and-seventy inches of muscularity. I was on the long avenue when I met him, at the point where it winds high above the rapid Clodagh. I was treading, about to tread, land withheld. What had the speech of man to do with me? To-day one of those hours on the journey was mine when doubt is slain. "Where is the Arabian," I cried, "with his knowledge of hidden things, to come and tell us about these great vineyards, fruit of the multitudinous siftings of a precious connoisseurship, scattered up and down with such prodigality through our land; to present them to us for what they still may prove to be, the lungs of the nation."

Travellers tell a tale about Japan—that far-off country with its fame à Bayard—how every child is taught not merely to love, but to express the meanings of beauty; how art has filled the chair of its history; how along its very roadways stand, not warnings to keep-clear, but friendly signs telling the comrade-wayfarer how to keep count of time, how to reach those points from which the solace of their most enchanting prospects may be obtained. Allow me the privilege then to become that sign to this particular place. You have not seen beauty like this before. Nature may be a prodigious builder, but she never repeats.

You see that glade, the one rising from the lake, the lake near the house where the great fountain

plays. No man has ever thought of putting a spade into that soil. Ancient lea hoed by faerie rakes, it is the battlefield of the moon-daisies and the buttercups. Lift up your eyes into the ramage of this insulated great tree, the sweet-mast of the field mouse—wee, sleekit, cowrin', tim'rous beastie—can you tell me if its wild charm results from eugenic sterilisation? Or is it a family tree? every fluted column a separate nursling down to the living root and yet, Mischanter fall me! indivisible from the parent stem. Stand back here, at this distance, and see how it balances the landscape, then oak me no oaks, no firs, no knotted elms. I swear by every lichen, nut and leaf, by every truffle that it pastures deep, the beech to be the shogun of the forest.

Darrigal! you may not have heard of Darrigal. These are its woods over there. Gold-jacket lives in that abundance: white-owl too, but he is dozing now. His time is not yet. Let us leave him to his dreams, his vision of mice, of beetles in dazzling armour. These white clouds creeping over the upland, that might be flowers of the field on march! The faces seem white. They may be Cheviots. I cannot say. But I can tell you about those cows, yonder standing out of the hot sun in a bunch together. You know the true story of the king's butter.

"How
The King asked the Queen,
And the Queen asked the dairymaid,
Can we have some butter
For the royal slice of bread?
How
The Queen asked the dairymaid,
And the dairymaid said, Certainly,
I'll go and tell
The Cow
Now
Before she goes to bed."

Those cows are glossy enough to have come from the llanos of Venezuela; but wherever they hail from, that is the sort of butter they make. They have to, you see, because Pan has a villa in these woods, and Pomp lives here. Not the pomp of the bumbly-bee, of Ethiopian lands, but the pale pearly fellow, of the caress in fairyland.

Report will have it that the parks and the green holts of England are to be surrendered to the plough; for man must live by bread. But what would France have been without her Azay and Amboise; without her chateaux from Bearn to Artois? What would England have been? What radical thing does Curraghmore, and the Curraghmores of our land, awaken in the consciousness? What would our opinion to-day be, if walking here in the care of God, out of human earshot, we were conversing leisurely and putting our views before Him. "That we were sure it was all quite authentic; the art of fine living, its long reflections stretching away upon every side; but—He had invited our confidence—it was to be feared the world had ceased to bother why He had brought it into existence; that Ireland, if she had not joined, was at last about to join the world: the star set in the circle around the middle of things in this island, combust!"

In part Curraghmore represents just Reverence; a temple raised to our ultimate yearnings, where year in year out, from Candlemas to Petertide and round to Yule again, Nature's processional winds with slow unhurried ritual. Do you not envy the people who live here? I do not mean the noble family who are the keepers of its carucates, but the people about whom Teigue's wife (when I found her ear) told me. How, if you lingered until the shadows lean over the

brink of the mountains and belong, you may hear the harebells ringing; for at star-shine there are faerie Vespers in these woods . . . then Benediction of the Night. By day there is only the choiring of the birds and ordered loveliness. To-day the forest was steeped in a radiance so powerful it seemed in the trance of an immense inspiration. Where the sun spilt himself in chasms of light between the leafy peristyles it was a furnace. The very willows ached in the sweltering heat. At intervals a flake of gold, detaching itself from some great tree, would fall to the ground; but not a sparrow dipped his wing in lake or river. Only the heavy traffic of the insects along the pathway of the sun disturbed the silence.

"The life of an old hat," Teigue said, "is to cock it. If you want to get the hold of this place on you, start from Clonegam."

He was just preparing to leave for his work. I was still annoyed with him over his man-handling of the farmers; but that could not take from my affection for him, or from the bigness generally of his laughing philosophy. Indeed this parting direction is itself a measure of that bigness; for in the little church of Clonegam is the tomb of the Lady Kathleen, whose white hand was the heraldic key, the Dacre knot entwining Powers with Beresfords. Perhaps, too, for his mind was deep, he associated this Church of the Meadow of the Winding Stream, where the Beresfords sleep, with a hundred romantic things; including that curse which, if I had any strength, I would go out fasting with my bell ringing it hard, until a malediction rested on anyone who ever again mentioned it; for what is the good of a curse unless it lift the heart and have vitality.

Curses are grave things. They so frequently

signify the violation of love that only the weak or vicious think of them with ribaldry; yet, strangely, the mention of cursing, more often than not, provokes levity. But grave or light, except Mammon ("the least erected spirit that fell from Heaven") and God, there is not any other thing buckled to man's heart more closely. To listen to a man curse whose tongue hath power justice to render to solemn occasion is an experience never to be forgotten. As cursers, sailors enjoy a reputation—not always deserved—of being full ship-rigged. Soldiers would seem more to need the faculty. "All reminiscences are alike to me," said the general, "but the sergeant-major who can't quench a blast furnace with a curse isn't worth a damn."

Great curses are among the treasure of mankind. He is a poor scholar whose memory or experience does not furnish him with the story of at least one curse capable of biting into the conventions. From kings to cardinals, from cardinals to counts, from counts to plain honest persons, all alike have cursed the world to its first chaos. The universality of the practice has never cheapened it. There are curses that sweep across iniquity like the rays of a lighthouse. In others, like that upon the sisters of Cordelia—those devils got between lawful sheets—the poison works more slowly.

History and literature are littered with curses. To some we may dissent. The curse of Prometheus seems irrational. Count Cenci is not an engaging figure. Some objurgations, like the maledictions of Donald McGowan, are more in the nature of prophecies; and in that case the wheel came full circle for the prophet himself. Others again are not worth a curse. "Small curses upon great occasions," quoth

Captain Shandy, "are so much waste of our strength and soul's health to no purpose."

"I own it," replied Dr. Slop.

"They are like sparrow-shot fired against a bastion," said Uncle Toby; which drew from Captain Shandy the remarkable piece of metaphysical statistics that "they serve to stir the humours, but carry off none of the acrimony."

One may however wander into wrong paths by concluding because a curse is brief, like the curse of Cromwell, that there are no crafty tricks about it. Again while some curses are cryptic, like the famous example of Captain Cobelitz; others, such as the comminations of the deformed and scurrilous Thersites, are merely vulgar. They do not peer into the essence of things. But when all is said, such considerations touch no more than the matter of picturesque phrasing, the label to the drug. It is the doom, the mysterious wave by which the curse torn from the heart is guided rather than any spiced and gingered quality of its setting, that it appeals to the elemental in us; to the real ego, behind the tomfoolery of business which our stomachs compel us to pursue.

From the curse at whose utterance "the waters of the deep lifted a thousand heads to listen," respect has been forthcoming for the man or nation that can curse comprehensively. The French curse to good effect; yet Corneille was envious of the English. This I think was an error of judgment. There is a velocity—and I would remind you of the scientific definition of velocity as the speed with which you let go a hot plate—there is velocity to the Gallic cult of imprecation that the English, except for Ernulphus, never attained. The French too have breadth: the English blow too much on the point of the flame.

The Israelites—to go back to remote times—were thirst-quenching cursers. We must arm ourselves with caution before attempting a judgment upon the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy—There is rawness about it. It has not ullaged well—but except to say that despite its comprehensiveness it is not a good example of the imaginative realism, the grand disorder, running through all the cursing of that small people, it is best perhaps left to the Church. The Israelites were unquestionably impassioned cursers. The more suave Egyptian (from whom they learned nothing) invoked the great gods to " reckon with the impious when reckoning is made."

But long-memoried (instance our preservation of the correct Elizabethan sound of the diphthongs ea and ai) and long-winded, we can ourselves furnish examples of some of the most potent and balanced cursing in Europe. There is an angry clangour to our ire (upon heroic occasion) cognate with the swift back-flowing of the ebb upon a combing sea. This of course is natural. Had not our Ollaves taken cursing, regulated its fasts, codified it; as later our Samurai of another race codified and gave its gloss to the duel? Are we not the only nation to reduce to principles its complimentary arts, " the Vow-Negative " and " Dodging a Curse "? Are we not ourselves a curse to anyone who has ever tried to make head or tail of us? This is not putting on the big pot. I am not forgetting Cromwell's prayer, " In the name of Christ to think it possible you might be mistaken." Nor in this connection am I writing of modern Ireland; for whether regarded as a gain or loss the science has deteriorated in modern times.

I read a report in some paper a little time ago of the meeting of a County Council. In ancient Ireland

—the Ireland of Emain of the comely hosts, of princes, of ollaves, of her orders of civil and military nobility—a County Councillor would correspond roughly in social standing to a Bo-aire or cow-chief, a non-noble freeman renting his land from a noble, the highest order of the common people; a man of petty, nay of considerable importance in his way, himself at times subletting his land to under-tenants.

The incident I refer to occurred at the meeting of one of these modern Councils somewhere in the north-west of the country. The question under discussion was the support to be allotted, or withheld from, the native language. Prominence was given in the report to the remarks of one gentleman, a member of the Council, who wanted to know "What bloody good was Irish to his sons?" also to the expression of his opinion that that language "was no bloody use to anyone." He stated too that he was as good an Irishman as any man there; which might mean many things—that his brother-councillors held their inheritance from the past in indifferent esteem for one thing.

It would be interesting, had one the leisure and inclination, to follow up this gentleman's misuse of that word "bloody." I refer to the incident at all only as an instance of that deterioration at which I hint; but on the point of misuse it is interesting to note that this particular man—I fear I forget even his name—claimed to have his quiver full of stout English words that were good enough for him. Well, if speaking English in England and one must use this word "bloody," it is correct to say "This is a bloody warm day," meaning "disagreeably warm"; but meaningless, except in the way of offence and uncouthness, to say that a thing is "no

bloody good." As an Irishman, speaking English in Ireland, as this gentleman claimed to be, the expression is radically at fault. There is a wealth of "negative expletives" at our disposal in Anglo-Irish; but "bloody" is not one of them. This however is a digression.

Apart from its mettle, there is a finesse, a talent of setting off the most unlikely subjects, about our cursing, which at one time made us the envy of less gifted races. Curses, such as that of St. Rodanus on Tara, or those of the renowned Carberry, the poet, whose maledictions raised blisters the size of gulls' eggs upon his enemies, speak for themselves. I do not refer to these. But gather around you the imprecations of Sean the Proud and you will want to be alone with your emotions. Peer into the curse of the Thin Woman of Inis Magrath upon the policemen who were exhibited naked before the blushes of Eternity. Study the curse in 26 verses—but I must not give away all my small stock of erudition. It is not lawful for the seer to impart all his knowledge.

The Greeks, except for Timon, have been poor cursers. Timon before the walls of Athens poured out curses with a bounty for which, outside Ireland, there is no parallel; the recoil of which is still felt around the pinnacle of Lycabettus. But let us be quit with strangers. Ernulphus, Bishop of Rochester, is since his time the model of all ambitious cursing. He exhausted it. Like the Webbs he went into it in the wholesale way. It is true that wit is never so penetrating as in invective: happily so, or our own reputation for that commodity were tattered; but there is a passionate compression, an orientation, about this great man which satisfies. He played on his victims as Pan played on his pipes, with an

assured felicity. He made it a whole-time pursuit. He mastered the intricacies of anatomy, he even perfected himself in the vascularity of the glands, so that when he cursed not a duct or articulation might escape him. The Church in an emergency has never hesitated to put the Black Spot on people, but at no period does it appear to have developed the resource of Ernulphus. Sin or subterfuge, he went through them like an elephant through a corn brake. Wherever the defender was, in the house, the stables, the fields, the highways, whether robed in ermine, or naked in his bath or in bed with his wife, the curse searched him out and withered him. There was nothing left except a breath of leprosy. If this great ecclesiastic had been at the Conclave of Viterbo, one can surmise how differently that assembly would have been conducted; how unnecessary it would have proved for the burgesses of that celebrated town—after three years' plunder of their resources—to resort to an otherwise unworthy stratagem in order once for all to terminate a discreditable business.

The morality of cursing is matter of clergy and best left alone by laymen. Theology outlives secular animosities. But not all the theologians from Eusebius of Caesaria to this hour could change, by a feather in the peacock's tail, the delight of humanity in the curse. The very birds of the Bible, when cursed, take on a sudden friendliness. A curse, that of Camelot, inspired the most exquisite fantasy in the English tongue. "I wouldn't acknowledge we ever owed anything to a McLeod," my uncle was wont to say, "except their curse. They never had anything else to give but what they stole. But their curse, my lad, was no haverings. It put the red stripe down our Tartan and gave glint to it."

So the life does hard in every curse. We cling by the foot fast to it. So too with the curse that now concerns us, of the Beresfords. We are loth to part from it. We nurse it by the chimney corners. At every unusual confluence of chance we take it out afresh and fondle it. And yet I question if the oldest man in the world could unravel the mystery of its origin, which is the only mystery about it. I defy any man, with even a distant relative for an Irishman, not to feel ashamed in the breast of his shirt over its footling inefficacy. There was never a gleam of genius in the whole tale of it. There was never a bowline's length of grip to any part of it. Warranted to last six generations, what happened? A clergyman could not make a false step compelled to tell its history. Regretted accident befell two of the six. The first Marquis, who died in 1800, died peacefully with his head on his pillow. Henry, the second Marquis, died of gout. John, the fourth Marquis, who was in Holy Orders, died of gastric fever. Henry, fifth Marquis, died after prolonged suffering, the result of injuries sustained in the hunting field. How far the curse had anything to do with the death, say, of the third or great Marquis—ad unguem factus homo—it would puzzle Ernulphus himself to explain. To the ordinary mortal, familiar with the adventure of his life, the wonder will always be that so reckless and gallant a horseman had not broken his neck a quarter of a century before.

When the first Marquis reigned in Curraghmore, the Lord Doneraile pilloried by Philpot Curran was at the zenith of his evil fame. If zero were then the sum of things; if like the Cardinals at Viterbo men then bartered honour with light fingers; if "that strong and able race who steadily opposed themselves

to Ireland's desire "—meaning, stripped of its vesture of fair words, the opposition of a ruling minority to any diminution of its indefensible privileges—had things to their account that read to-day like wild imaginings, time has covered these ancient acerbities with her years. No Oisin holds an attentive world rapt who sings the ruin of a helot wind.

I was sitting on a bank of grass and going ahead steadily with these reflections, now lifted above myself, now bowing my head and uttering dreary noises, trying to penetrate the press of vapours which still obscure the high-politik of our affairs, when the mountains lit up entangled in some way in white light. It was like a hall, all mirrors, lit suddenly by a thousand lamps. You have seen such things—like the dawn—which science takes apart into their component parts as you may watch a child take apart the wheels of a timepiece that he cannot replace. Moments are granted to the humblest, moments of expansion, when the mind tips freely in its gimbals, when the spiritual realm opens out, when its awareness takes shape within what for want of a better word we call our *being*. The shaping of a tale that long had been laid away came back into my mind.

"Science to the devil," said I; "it is Shoon, Shoon of the Silver Horn, the Maker of Clouds, the Lord of Ruth. He is passing in the valley from where I went up yesterday into the mountains, and has smiled up at them. He is in the land at last. He has come from his castle, bright as day, in the heart of the hills, to spy the land."

I knew the tale:

"'not fabulous
(though so esteemed by shallow ignorance)'."

His finding of the little maid who had lost her way in the mountains. His game with her, leading her into the Wilderness of Mildew Blast; then out, upon the skiff of Sure dependence, over the Lake of Poison Patches, by the Rocks of Enchantment, until they came to the bridle-path on the dry shore that wound into the green country she called Home. It was a little idyll dropping amity from its birth. The very elves befriended it. How his heart, won by the beauty, the frankness, the faith in him of her shining eyes, he had promised, at parting, that one day when she had grown to womanhood he would come again, with a wedding-robe; that he would make her land the beloved of his great brothers, the Lords of Light, and Wind, and Fruitfulness, and Harmony.

Oh Ireland, illustrious and beloved name! A shell with galliard filled, with song, romance, with mystery; a corymb clustering in thy children's hair. Because I believe thy sons will never lop and hew and hack, and leave the branches of thy beauty, drop to hang like criminals from thy bleeding trunk; because I believe, with millions more, in the augury of thy out-stretching past, I do not less deplore, deplore, while time was yet, that England, Minstrel of a thousand strings, sovran Empire majestical of history! turned only to thee, a child, braiding thy locks with rosy twine, to cheat the ennui of a leisured hour. Hadst thou not helped to "build Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land"? not sped the inspiration of that flower-kirtled line so close her heart? not held to her, waiting the turning of her will, thy hands for love? Because I believe thy leaf will never perish in the green I do not speed desire the less, but more, that in her fullness time will find

thee, Daughter of wit and comely reason! when thy board is set, beckoning thy shepherd old, then cherished friend, once more to eat and bind with thee, Thestylis of the Western sea! the sheaves of an inseparable Destiny.

I went over again the legend of Shoon. Doubtless there might be nothing strange for us in another disappointment; but that hardening of the will I put from me.

"I would give them," said I, "with the blessing of Patrick" . . . but first, perhaps, it is necessary for me to explain whom I had in mind when speaking of "them." "Them" are Orangemen; because if you have only read of Orangemen you might imagine they were like those fellows you see painted on tea boxes, Tartars I think they call them. Now an Orangeman is really not a bit like that. He is just a hard-bitten navigator in theological waters like any other native of this island. He is not always tender-stepping, but he has a helping hand. Like the Moorish gens d'arme on the black charger, he may be the physical representation of the awful danger of sin; but find him off parade, and he has a heart soft as his grip is firm.

I do not think that any of my ancestors, upon either line, were burned at the stake by Queen Mary. Mary dignified her reign by one worthy act. She burned at the stake that superlative rascal, Cranmer. But mostly, it will be within your remembrance, she was under the domination of her husband; of whom it will be sufficient to say that he was a Spaniard. The times were dangerous. The faithful moved cautiously, if reverently. But outside a clean-swept smiling thorp, not half one hundred miles from say

Killinchy, in the pleasant county of Down, there is a paradise of solitude complete with lake; that sort of retreat a man mentions casually, but with honourable pride, as the home of some family friend. It is a very handsome demesne, a place of price. I would not care to hazard a calculation—shall I say nuts or trees—how many trees I climbed in that paradise. And up-bye, between Antrim and Carrickfergus town, you may follow the loops of an old road along which hedgerows still bloom, for me, in the way those nightingales used to sing by the calm Bendemeer that Rabindranath Tagore (or was it Mr. Pendennis) tells about. I have also in the odd collection of old books beside my fire, that I call my library, "King, State of the Protestants in Ireland, 1692," printed under the authority of Nottingham; and a history—a very excellent one—of the Great Prince of Orange. Well, I mention the point about that narrow Romanist Queen, Mary, and those books, and that handsome demesne and old road, as random proofs of my claim to what wits might call "a good working ignorance" of Orangemen.

The Orangeman has been described as a bigot. It is the last thing that would occur to one intimate with him to suggest. Even a Grand Master does not want to convert anyone to his faith. He wants to keep them out of it. "There are too many of us already," he says, "and too few jobs to go round." And this mention of Grand Masters brings me to others I have now in mind, the Veld-heers, the men in every clime who have made it family business to eat at the tables of nations. They are in your mind already. Sacré . . . but I am not Heckla. Best leave them to the historian. After all, what have we,

the plain people, the "only just and disinterested supporters of the law," to do, except in the way of endurance, with either Veld-heers or Grand Masters? Nations throw them up and they fade away, and their remembrance with them. The Orangeman, the pawky genial fellow who takes the wife and kiddies for a May Day on the Twelfth of July, the cunning craftsman who grows the big apples around Portadown, who, steady eye and faultless hand, manipulates the gantries of Belfast, the real Orangeman, his passions played on as if he were a melody organ, has never had half-a-chance to show himself for what he really is, an original loyal comrade on the Main Street of Life.

My eyes turned to the great hills. It was a queer wild twist maybe.

"Bás gon sogart!" I exclaimed. "I would have Ireland re-deed them those six cantons (reserving the fee), and the other three as well, if her abundance could bring them to exchange that lifeless thing called Civic Sense . . . for the Spirit of the Nation." IF? Capital or the Commune, would the men ever be found out who had so long fattened by laying snares for words? I wished I knew how the elements were mixed in that haggis, "Statecraft" as men now call it. I knew the strange seasonings that went into it. I knew its constituents; but the secret of all haggis is in the mixing. I wished I understood that mixing that I might pour out scalding Miltonic words on the profound humbugs, grandducally bejewelled in virtue, who so long had taught us that mud is the proof we are in the thick of things; who had evoked that Death in life, that monster half Jew half satyr, from the steppes of Russia;

who had involved our world in such immeasurable hazards.

Men said that Ireland stands where the Hounds of Heaven and Hell divide their ways; that the immediate years ahead would be the critical years: whether she would follow the Riders of Donald Power; or crying "Away with them! Give us Barabbas," go down into the Temple with the money-changers, the new Tarsimaculae, who with the craft of Mentor, and in his guise, would present this nation with logarithms for faith; would lead her into the only bondage she had ever known.

I wished a hundred things. And then, there stole into my mind, mellisonant, the words of Father Hilarion.

"I have no plans like the Abbé Siéyès, Mr. Davidson, for governing the world; but those who have youth will see this land as that good man, Cobbett, saw the England of his desire, self-sufficing, deep, intense, of restless idealism."

A wind most sweet was blowing around me, and as it blew (for the story of this ancient land is unconcluded), sitting there upon my bank of grass, I saw the strangest thing happen: that light of white lifted itself clear of the hills. Some sorcery was working within it. It was branching into bracts, giant sheathing involucres upon them, whirling within itself. Then its creative travail ended it hung acre-wide, a plain of opal, motionless in the strasophere. The horn descended from my eyes and as I looked, the Vision—if vision it were—unrolled before them. There, through that effulgence, I saw the diorama of my country unfold as Father Hilarion saw it. I saw her, Ocean's nursling! rise like the domes of an

Eastern city from the level horizon of the sea—no land of indolent beatitude, basking under some divine Amrita tree—but one of comfortable quarters; where law languished and lupinars were unknown; where a nation had provided safeguards for human beings around the maelstrom of the great-getters; where, like willows by the water courses, great clusters of learning filled the valleys; places of good reception, where beauty grew yet science flourished. I saw a land where machinery had been made the instrument not master of men's will, where meanness was manacled, where flippancy was contraband. I saw the House of Nazareth rebuilt and shining wide over it.

An impulse had unswung the chain of images jumbled in my brain into a broad undimpled sequence. I saw the Soul of Ireland around which a Nation in arms stood to attention, all the figures of that frieze which I have sought to trace with uncertain hand. "By my heart!" I asseverated, "Christ did not come to teach men how to gather big eggs. Black Rose is not the rose in the hair of Phryne. The triviality of her material opportunities, the handicap of world-commerce, the absence of gross population, the fertility of her soil, the nature-magic of her literature, the endurance of her long hibernage, those mountains of No-Temptation, These," said I, "are trenchant things. They keep firm the courage of those who believe that this country will never strive after the supernaculum of bearing a large paunch with noisy credit; that one day, sloughing from her shores the egosauri that the slime of civilisation had cast up, she will cancel her captivity." I went over the flaming words of Tiorddalbac MacSuibne. "Our

future history shall be more worthy than that of any contemporary State. . . . We shall arouse the world from a wicked dream of material greed . . . to the wonder of a regenerated Spirit—a new and beautiful dream—and we shall establish our State in a new Freedom that shall endure for ever."

Good luck with it! a storm-cock faith, a noble dream, a dream that once for centuries had been staggering fact, a vision of Patmos; a dream of the great days, when the Spirit of Red Hugh would ride forth again from the caverns of Muckish. The Soul of Ireland! putting the wind of the Four Gospels up a World's Forum.

Curraghmore is romance soaring. The crystal of that Lord Marcher who set the wind singing through the helmets of those romantic robbers, the Norman Knights. The landing of Robert. The gathering of the carcanets. The procession of the barons. The obeisance to Lionel. The escape from Elizabeth. The baiting of Cromwell. The coming of Marcus, Rudolph of his house. His wooing of the Lady Kathleen (Sainte-Simon had not yet commenced to write for us his immortal history of the Hyacinth, when here under the Comeraghs a hyacinth was blooming, more shell-like than ever Haarlem raved about). Times change in Locksley, but here romance flows on. The holiness to the Lord. The decree of the Bishops! The mixed opportunity! The Withered Hand! The cartulary of the 160,000 acres! The Gilla Dacker or Great Marquis! The dream of the Lady Vivian, old when the writing on the sun-dried bricks of Babylon was new. The amazing Tooth, whose parents had mislaid his name; (who dreaming himself a swan awoke, in the inferno called

Res Judicata, to find himself an ugly duckling). The more amazing judge: "Can a still-born child be said to sleep?" The modillions upon one hundred pillared phantasies. The ramifications far-flung of an arresting lineage. And last, but like the canons in procession not least, its place—the plenitude of power still reposing within these lordly chase, these gatherings together and piling up of stones—the place of it all in the dream . . . when we have quit the stable-yard of life. Save a handful—the Desmond-Inchiquins, these Power-Beresfords, the O'Donoghues of the Glens, the scattered Geraldines, the veriest sprinkling—there is no ancient *Aristoi* in Ireland. Alone of the nations its blood has flowed down the centuries, or exiled holds its rightful place in foreign lands. Would this newer line of Nobles, now in succession, slip one by one away; leaving their land, the land that nourished them, to cross the Desert of Endeavour as best she may? Or—but again I follow a thought-line that has no place in this book.

Curraghmore is romance in *curiosa felicitas*. And man loves romance. Woman: idle song: the moon at full: its light upon the arabis: the fulfilment of the pilgrim stars: the quest of Marquesan seas; these help him to deceive Time, the Hateful One. Man is interested in the viewpoint of the joiner who regards a tree as so many deal boards, of the farmer who translates its assonance and mystery into gate-posts—these things must be—but he does not attend service in his church, the supreme testimony of his being, to learn the hedonic calculus of heaven. He goes because his spirit lives upon romance—the romance of God! From the long days when Kylta MacRonan hunted his dogs of the dagger-teeth through its

marsh-girth forests, Curraghmore, and all that pertains to it, is a foaming silence of romance.

Peace with it! Peaceful may rise its ingle reek!

For three whole days I dwelt already the next door to heaven.

INTO THE MIST

"CITIES that of old were great," says Herodotus, "most of them are become small, and those that in my time were great, these were before small." It is a world of unceasing change. To-day white-wind from the south is in the trees. The birds are singing to it high up in the tall branches. To-morrow there is foreboding in the heart. Baleful bird-flocks hover above the land. There is a close-up of the Fates. Power knows this truth, but puts it differently. "One won't be always young," he said to me, "a chap's got to hustle while the doing's good."

Mentioning to him that I would have to be thinking about parting from Dinoclus, he asked me what the upset of him would be. I told him what I paid.

"Would £7 be any use to you?" he said.

It would not. It would not be any use to me whatever. If that were the way Workers' Republics intended to do business I salute liberty in the Roman fashion. Seven pounds for trap, cushions, harness and Dinoclus—three parts, as Perch said, blood, and one corn—looking larger and handsomer this morning than I had ever seen him.

Concealing my annoyance, I put forth an argument against the insufficiency of the sum suggested which I still consider sound.

"I don't understand," I ended, "how there could

be a difference of nearly one hundred per cent in the price in a couple of months."

Power shook his head.

" There's lots o' things in this country," he said, " you're not expected to understand. You just learns them. They took you in, Sir. The harness is old. The leaves of the springs are gone. The trap is too heavy for the little donkey. Myself I wouldn't put the money beyond five-ten."

So that was Perch ! *coureur-de-bois,* tyre-enforcer, tatooer of rainbows—" a whistlin' thief."

" The donkey alone is worth the money," I said stoutly.

" My feelings are with you, Sir," he replied, " but I'm fe'erd you bought every hair in his tail. Thirty shillings is his price anywhere."

So it was not Teigue's doing then. I oscillated. I fell into one of those fugues that are for ever overtaking me. Was labour right after all ? What was the value of worth in a world filled with its abominable " Charity begins at home. Its hold the bone and the dog will follow you. Its early bird and the worm " ; a world stripped bare as a vulture's neck by a sounder of capitalists, fit only to be frozen to ice in a fresh glacial epoch ; and the sooner it came the better. . . .

From some immeasurable distance articulated sounds were wrestling with the ganglions of my brain. With an almost audible click I succeeded in jerking my mind back into the socket of consciousness to my surroundings. Power was speaking. . . . " He lives over the other side of the river," I heard his voice. " He's been looking for a yoke like it. He is a little sailor-man sort of a fellow. I'm not say-

ing, mind you, that every pound there is not a prisoner; but it's soft money just the same, that he has out of his school. I will do the best I can with him; if you leave it with me."

I left it with him. He closed the sale for £8. With difficulty I persuaded his acceptance of the extra pound.

"For Madam," I pressed him. "To the house. It is the stranger's gift."

A word more of Power. You know Suppe's "Poet and Peasant"? Or if by mischance it has still to come your way, life, when it comes, will be the richer to you for its inheritance. It is often near to me, rippling through the ventricles, the empty spaces, of my brain. Now when it comes, it brings with it Teigue. Followers of the chase tell us there is a difference between hunting a fox and fox-hunting. I think the difference applies to Teigue. Teigue Power will never consider it necessary to prove his allegiance to his country by xonophobia; to assert his manhood by purple manners.

A basketful of young Powers to him! At Fiddown, where I was to join the railway, there is a timbered bridge over the Suir. Crossing this bridge you pass out of Decies.

When the train at last pounded into the station, the end was upon me. Stepping on board, Dinoclus gone, I was stepping again into that man-made world—but have I not fired sufficient harpoons into it to sink a school of whales? What mattered was that other speckled world—may 800 blessings 12 times be ever upon it—to which I was turning my back; where for seven weeks I had lived beyond the covers of commercialised geography. It may have existed only in

my imagination; but did that matter either? Now I would be far from Donald Power, from Father Hilarion; from Perch too, for all he did *pampootie* me, from all the lustre of the tumbling bays of that Côte d'Argent of the Decies; yet there was this compensation. The Painter—Memory—and Ryland, will be with me, friends of my very own that I had found for myself. Ryland will know where the widgeon mate in the marsh, where the brook trout are taking. The Painter will enlarge these trout by multiples of ten, will plant willows by that brook. Life moves in eschelon formation; but there would now be always in the one platoon a little crowd of us—the Painter, and the Rev. Hopkins, and myself. When the heat and marchings of the day are over; when we tire of the schemes of ambition our imaginations make, and of love and the poets, and philosophy, then refilling our pipes, we will wreathe and re-wreathe those daft days . . . behind the lull of the winds.

My compartment was packed. Cutting in with a friendly nod to the two men on the platform side, I squeezed into a place and was thankful to get sitting down. Save for two naval ratings—journeying to see their people, they told me later, and going somewhere, I forget where, on the point of the Shannon—the carriage was filled with cattle-dealers; big, heavy, claret-faced, earnest, well-satisfied looking men. There was a fair I gathered up the line.

Why do men mishandle the hours consecrated to good fellowship? The climax was reached after we left Kilsheelan, a wayside station in a rich well-wooded valley. The ratings were cheerful fellows and bore up a long time, but the cattle-dealers had laid on too much sail. We groaned under a weight

of stores, strippers, condition, quality, and the dependence of the universe on horned beasts, until the limit of strain passed. The main mast crashed and went down the board.

Persons acquire in their wanderings strange delusions. Time had persuaded me that I knew something of high-lights, of limejuicers, of the lower deck; of men of varying types back in the ground-floor operating blocks of life. Well, I knew nothing about them. Before I realised what had happened, the sailors, cutlasses in teeth, were boarding the cattle-dealers up the foreshrouds. It showed what a handful of determined men can do. The compartment was in tumult. I have heard of hurricanes of profanity, but these two were easily the long-distance blasphemers of my acquaintance. I wondered what Teigue would have thought of them. They poured broadsides into the men of beef, broadsides of blasting scorn upon all that I had been taught from childhood to hold in veneration, bullocks, the Farmer's Union, the dealers themselves, all our stone-fronted institutions. They trampled in the odours of Cambodia our whole pastoral civilisation.

And yet you are to conceive these two sailors as pleasant fellows; for the dealers getting out further up country, falling to babbling, they proved themselves to be full of agreeable and entertaining discourse. The younger man was "fed up," he said. He certainly looked it. He was a handsome, fearless youth: pleased too with himself as a cockatoo.

And now from my window I can see the mysterious refulgence where night enveloped that city to which Lady Wilde, in her impressive hand, held up the mirror of its regrettableness. Like the merry tales of

the Wise Men of Gotham all things must end. In a moment, a cypher again, I will be back in the mist. The game is over. The players dispersed.

Certain days come for all of us when the going means no return. It is the secret of that tightening of the heart within the most transient separation. The Irish whatever faults lay to their door did not mock good-bye. They wove through it all the music of their history. Their speech of it was like a waving of fans, cheating the home-sickness of the mind; a grace, putting the charm of our people upon Van Gelder paper. I cannot say why I write in the past tense, only that sometimes, meeting men, beardless, with arrogant eyes, who claim for sires the gifted race —dowered with nobility of blood and mind and jewelled womanhood—who have passed like a song no longer sung, one crosses oneself in secret and hurries on. . . . But perhaps it is just youth in their clumping feet.

Manners pursue a road trod by footsteps worth following. They are stars, illuminating the matterful informing gloss of the past. Manners, and the salutations of a race, cannot be acquired as a man may grow chin whiskers. " The flower that cometh up in a night has its root in the ages." The manners of a people are its bells, its salutations the silver tongues of these bells. Father Hilarion, skilled campanaro, insisted he was always listening for, always hearing, their sob and swell, their magical melody. Perhaps it explained why he served with such fearlessness. In sooth is he not right? for despite its scars, despite its fetters of a score of forgings, in the countryside of this island you are still in the countryside of that England, that ribaned land, which once laying its

touch upon a man hath him for ever, the England of George Herbert, of the Canterbury Pilgrims, of John Paston of Paston, in the County of Norfolk, gentleman.

Maker of Porcelain. . . . Dismiss!

THE END

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